1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

son, while her first son Mpezeni remained head of segment 4 as if he had been borne by her linked senior. Traditionally, a junior linked co-wife who had borne sons that had been taken over by her linked senior might be rewarded for her services by the formation of her own segment, to which she took her youngest son, and the disposition of sons in segments 4 and 11 was in accord with this principle. Another wife of Zwangendaba who was attached to segment 4 was given her own segment 12 (Mkucweni) in which she lived with two linked juniors and other quasi-related dependants. A lieutenant of segment 4 made his own inferior segment 9 (Cikenkheni).

At the next generation level Mpezeni created segment 10 (Loangeni) for his great wife and later established two subsidiary bevies of wives in segments 14 (Fumbeni) and 15 (Cimpinga). Within one of these, segment 14, a junior wife made her own segment 17 (Ngiyelweni) and Mpezeni placed another wife in the headquarters of segment 4, in accordance with the custom by which the heir to any large segment placed one of his wives in the headquarters of that segment. Finally, in each of segments 10 and 11, a lieutenant broke out of the headquarters to found his own segment, namely 13 (Tondweni) and 16 (Fafazeni) respectively. Many other segments, large and small, were created but we have now mentioned all the segments under Mpezeni's control which later became the nuclei of counties in the Native Authority system and whose relative positions are shown in Diagram 1.

8. *Foreign policy*

The Fort Jameson Ngoni are described by pre-conquest travellers as living during the 1890s in a compact area surrounded by a belt of uninhabited country, beyond which were the tribes they raided. It seems probable that this spatial arrangement was not followed consistently throughout their history and that at various times and places the Ngoni came to some agreement with their neighbours whereby they either settled among them or established a settled rule over them. Thus Young, writing of the period 1835-9, says that the Ngoni settled among the Senga (Nsenga). Chibambo, however, says of the same period that the Ngoni 'captured many Senga without difficulty'.[36] The evidence is more definite for the period 1860-80, so far as Mwambera's group is concerned. Chibambo lists the tribes conquered by Mwambera in this period and adds: 'After overcoming them the Ngoni acted wisely; they did not break up local rule, or ways of

[36] Young, *History*, p. 111; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 12.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

society. This was not so among the Ngoni. We know little about the way in which rights in cultivated and grazing-lands, hunting-rights and rights to water were distributed in the old Ngoni State, but if the present position is any guide, it seems likely that there was no well-developed system of land-holding. After dwelling in any one area for five years or so, the tribe moved on, partly because the fertility of the soil had been exhausted and partly for other reasons. Thus rights to land did not endure; land itself was expendable. What endured was merely the pattern of residential settlement, the arrangement of people in clusters and divisions and villages. Men and women lived where they belonged in the segmentary residential system, and relative geographical position did not determine, but was determined by, political affiliation.

Power in the State was thus power over people rather than over natural resources. It is true that cattle were valuable, but even they appear to have been eaten rather more often than in many tribes in which cattle are a form of wealth and investment rather than a regular item of diet. Furthermore, there was the doctrine that all cattle belonged to the Paramount Chief, so that village headmen with cattle in their byres held them, as it were, only by favour of the chief. The principal index of power was the number of a man's dependants. Political struggles were essentially not struggles to control wealth but to enjoy the support of followers. The main source of dependants was from raiding, and hence the allocation of captives was crucial to the working of the social system.

Fraser writes of the northern Nyasaland Ngoni, that warriors kept their own captives.[1] This does not seem to have been the usual procedure among the Fort Jameson group. Although some informants spoke as if they, or their forebears, had been actually taken by the person who became their lord, others said that in general all captives belonged to the Paramount Chief, and that he could allocate them as he wished; usually, however, he allocated them to the warriors who had captured them. It was a specific privilege of regional governors to keep their own captives. It seems probable that the Paramount Chief's allocations were made to the heads of segments to which the warriors belonged, for many of my informants were said to have been captured by a few people, some of whom are described by contemporary travellers as generals and war-leaders, and who are unlikely to have made many front-line captures themselves. Moreover, it seems that on small raids organized by the head of a major segment, not on a national scale,

[1] Fraser, *Primitive people*, p. 37.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

kept at his village. Although his lords, and ultimately the Paramount Chief, had rights in the cattle, their day-to-day care was his responsibility and he had in practice the greatest say in their disposal, either for consumption, for payment of bridewealth, or for damages awarded against a member of his segment. He was head of the most clearly demarcated local group and was responsible for it to the heads of superior segments. The village was the cattle-herding unit, but for agricultural tasks it seems probable that in large villages the co-operative unit was the division. Agricultural work was directed, at least so far as women were concerned, by the lady of the division. I have no clear information on how domestic tasks such as cooking were organized within the village but it seems probable that individual women cooked for their husbands and for the children in their care.[18]

Fraser writes of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland that a village headman had special ritual duties to perform when his village shifted to a new site, and Rattray reports a similar procedure for the southern Ngoni. Wiese mentions an oracular [illegible]od of selecting a new village site among the Fort Jameson Ngo[illegible], but is silent on whether or not the headman had a special role to play.[19] I could gain no information from my own informants about former practices, but nowadays the headman has no specific ritual to perform when a village shifts.

There is little evidence about the number of villages in the Ngoni State. There are a few conflicting observations on population and size and number of villages in the Fort Jameson group at the time of the conquest,[20] and we have estimates for the population of different groups in recent years, but estimates of the population and number of villages at earlier dates are all highly speculative.

The term for lieutenant, *nduna*, was used at all levels in the residential system and was applied even to men who had not yet founded their own segments. As already mentioned, a lieutenant was a quasi-related dependant, not a kinsman, of his lord who was selected to be in charge of a section of his lord's dependants and to carry out the instructions of his lord. Some of my informants referred to a ceremony at which a new office of lieutenant was created and a feather placed in the hair of the newly appointed man, but others appeared not to have heard of this custom. The

[18] Barnes, *Marriage*, pp. 15*f*. For the Ngoni of southern Nyasaland, see Read, 'Standards', p. 16.

[19] Fraser, *Primitive peoples*, pp. 203*ff*; Rattray, *Folk-lore stories*, pp. 36*ff*, 109*ff*, 196*ff*; Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 199. In his 'Expedição', p. 480, Wiese associates this method only with a change of residence by the Paramount Chief.

[20] See pp. 103*f*.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

439 464 648 law and order. In this, not only the Ngoni were concerned. There was a shortage of labour in Nyasaland and Mpezeni's raids prevented labourers reaching that country from the interior. The campaign against Mwase in 1895 was undertaken partly with the aim of opening up labour routes and Mpezeni's defeat carried this a stage further. The Collector at Kotakota wrote shortly after the war: 'It is quite safe to say that no greater assistance has been given to these districts (and in fact to the Protectorate) than this opening up of the Luapula Valley by the conquest of Mpezeni.'[128] Yet the Luapula is 350 miles from Fort Jameson. Even Ngoni technical skill in fighting was of value to the new conquerors, for within six [167] months of the war Ngoni fighting men were in Southern Rhodesia, not as allies of the Ndebele but as part of the British South Africa Police. Within ten months, the headquarters of segment 13 had been moved to make way for the new Administrative capital. With the defeat of Mpezeni, North-Eastern Rhodesia became a country.

178 361 648 A final point requires explication. Granted that the Ngoni social system had to change in this new complex social environment, and granted also that their activities, in particular raiding, had to be adapted to new demands on their labour, why did not the Ngoni continue to live in large villages as they had done hitherto? There are numerous analogies in Africa where segmentary social systems have been fitted into an Administrative framework, and where raiding has given way to migrant labour, and yet the pattern of settlement has remained the same. Why did the big Ngoni villages disappear after 1898?

Part of the answer to this question can be stated in ecological terms. In pre-conquest times, the dense population, human and bovine, the great stretches of cultivated land, and the manifest prosperity of the people impressed themselves vividly on contemporary observers accustomed to the scattered settlements of the surrounding tribes. Angus writes:

> 'Before us lay an undulating valley some miles in breadth, which, as the heavily timbered hills on either side proclaimed, had once been covered with forest, but was now denuded of every vestige of a tree. Village after village surrounded by waving cornfields, and green plains dotted with herds of cattle, stretched away into the distance. Never before in any of my African wanderings had I seen such an extent of land under cultivation; the cornfields seemed unending, and the size and number of the

[128] *B.C.A.G.*, v, 6 (30 April 1898), p. 4.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

villages fairly astonished me; and it was not till then that I realized what a powerful and prosperous people were those whose acquaintance I was about to make.'[127]

We may compare this description of conditions in 1896 with that given by Trapnell for the same area in 1938.

'. . . Reserve II presents an example of combined cutting-out, soil-deterioration and erosion which probably has no equal in the Territory. . . . Cattle are most numerous in this reserve, and . . . their added burden on the land has doubtless helped to weigh the scales to the point of erosion. With cattle and an excessive population in Mpezeni's and Maguya's country, surface compaction and deterioration of soil have come to give place to wholesale wash, and denuded belts of resting land are now to be seen seared by dongas fully ten feet deep. The enormous gullied scars down the face of Nyamlinzi and neighbouring hills provide notable examples of the effects of millet cultivation on impossible slopes.'[128]

The devastation described by Trapnell has come about in part on account of the alienation of land to Whites, but it is also due to the transition which the Ngoni have been forced to make from living as migrant brigands to working as subsistence cultivators and migrant labourers. Even without alienation, it is likely that the large villages would have disappeared.

The population of the tribe immediately prior to the conquest was estimated by Deare to be 40,000 and possibly more. Johnston, in his highly ambitious population density map, appears to have assumed a population of about 50,000, while an official estimate in 1898 was nearly 150,000.[129] The area of Mpezeni's country was estimated by Angus to be about 400 square miles. He also delimits an area of about 2,700 square miles which he describes as 'Angoni-land proper', but it is clear that this large area includes much waterless uninhabited country. Johnston implies, on his map, an inhabited area of 3,200 square miles, but again there is clear evidence that in fact much of this was uninhabited. In 1903 it was estimated that the area within which the Ngoni kept their cattle before the conquest was about 600 square miles.[130] Angus's lower estimate is in accord with the distances between villages given by travellers

[127] Angus, 'Northern Angoniland', p. 76.
[128] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, pp. 67, 71.
[129] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 11 May; *A & P*, 1894, lvi, p. 769; *B.C.A.G.*, v, 3 (26 February 1898), p. 1.
[130] Angus, 'Northern Angoniland', pp. 74, 76; *B.C.A.G.*, iii, 11 (1 June 1896), p. 1; *Reports on the Administration*, 1903, p. 19.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

such as Sharpe, Thomson and Deare, and with my own information based on village histories. Combining this with the lowest estimate of population, we arrive at a population density of 100 persons to the square mile, while the highest estimate implies a density of 375. Highly unreliable as these figures are, it is clear that the density of population was considerably greater before the conquest than it is now, when it averages about 68 persons to the square mile. Even the present-day figure is nearly three times the density which the land can sustain in perpetuity.

This dense population was concentrated in large villages. Angus estimated that there were at least a thousand huts in Loangeni, while Deare estimated that there were sixteen hundred. Read states that it was over three miles across, while Genthe says that Ngoni villages were about five times the size of the average Cewa village. From the top of a mountain, Deare saw eleven villages all about the same size as Loangeni.[142] Thus it seems that there were several villages with populations of the order of three thousand. If Deare and Johnston are right in their estimates of tribal population the majority of the people lived in these big villages.

Yet by September 1898 the only villages left in Mpezeni's country were a few to the east of Fort Young. All the rest had been destroyed by troops, and their former inhabitants were said to be 'still timid' and living in scattered groups in grass shelters.[143] The large pre-conquest settlements were particularly vulnerable to attack by troops armed with guns and intent on burning, the more so because there were no defensive preparations at all. Glave wrote in 1894 that the Ngoni 'have no stockaded village, such protection they deem unnecessary as no enemy can be strong enough to attack them'.[144]

The large villages and the high density of population were appropriate only to a victorious military society, relying for at least part of its subsistence on raided crops and beasts produced outside its borders and for the rest on the maximum exploitation of the land inside them. When its enemies had been plundered and its own lands exhausted, it moved on. We can infer from Angus and from Sharpe, who wrote of 'entirely open' country,[145] that within the settled area most of the cultivable land was in use at the same time. Yet in many parts of the Fort Jameson area the soil is now exhausted after five years under maize and must be left for twenty-five years

[142] Angus, 'Northern Angoniland', p. 38; Deare, 'Slave raiders', 27 April and 11 May; Read, 'Tradition', p. 475, fn. 2; Genthe, 'Mpezeni V', p. 1.
[143] Sutton, memorandum dated 10 March 1901.
[144] Bk, fn. 399.
[145] Sharpe, 'Lake Nyasa', p. 243. For Angus, see pp. 109f.

1;Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

effort to induce them to co-operate actively with the government, and by 1910 he was looking forward to reducing the number of White officials in the Administration by devolving much of the Native work on to the Natives themselves. Co-operation was encouraged by the payment of small stipends to chiefs and others, varying in the 1920s in annual value from £22 10s. od. for Mpezeni down to 6s. for district messengers.

The Ngoni for the most part neither supported nor opposed this scheme of administration; they merely accepted it. For years the Administration bemoaned the indifference of the Ngoni, but apart from an attempt by a mission to set up its teachers as headmen, there was little attempt to obstruct the work of the Administration.

In matters of land, the authority of the Whites was also dominant, but here the paternal amiability which characterized purely political relations between Administration and Ngoni was lacking. The alienation of land was at the instigation of the North Charterland, who considered themselves the owners of Ngoni country. Fort Jameson was built by the Administration in the middle of Ngoni country and the land round the township, few facilities though the town then had, became more valuable to potential settlers than more fertile but inaccessible tracts. The high density of population in Ngoni country also attracted settlers with the prospect of an adequate labour supply. Thus we find that many of the first tracts of land alienated were located in the middle of Ngoni country, in the most densely populated section. As early as 1 January 1904 the first Commission was appointed to inquire into land questions in Ngoni country.[18] Now that Ngoni had to grow their own food on land which had already been heavily exploited the density of population fell; but in relation to the carrying capacity of the land in perpetuity there was still serious overcrowding. During the unsettled period of the war and its aftermath, the population was dispersed, but from 1900 down to about 1930, in consequence of alienation and the formation of [illegible] villages were gradually brought closer together. From 1930 onwards, with the recognition of land shortage by the Administration, villages have been allowed to spread out again. The negotiations concerning where the Ngoni should live have been protracted and complicated; I hope to discuss them in a later work in connexion with the economic background of Ngoni social life. What is here significant about them is that to a very large extent these negotiations have been carried on entirely by Whites, with the Administration representing for the greater part Ngoni

[18] *N.R.R.G.G.*, ii, 1 (1 January 1904), pp. 30–1.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

interests and those of neighbouring tribes against the North Charterland and the White settlers. Ngoni themselves have not been in a position to enforce their own point of view.

In the operation of the legal system White control has never been so complete, as we have indicated above. However the support given to the judgments of chiefs and others by the Administration prior to 1929 was political rather than legal, and the courts held by chiefs with or without the approval of the Administration did not form part of the same legal system as the Administration's own courts. In that year Native Courts with defined powers were established as part of the same legal system as other recognised courts in the British Empire, with ultimate connexion to the Privy Council.[1] In matters of religion White dominance has been achieved more slowly and has never been complete. But even in this field the religions brought by the Whites have triumphed over the cult of the chief's ancestors and to-day it is the Christians who are the ritual experts.

A parallel sequence of events has taken place in Nyasaland, save that there the amount of land alienated in the Fort Manning area has been small. A scheme of administration was given a legal basis in 1912, and was similar to that in Northern Rhodesia. It was revised in 1924, and in 1933 Native Authorities and Native Courts were set up.[2] The two principal missions in Fort Jameson District have stations in Nyasaland as well.

In both countries Ngoni have been required to pay tax. A hut tax was introduced on the Rhodesian side of the border in 1901 and at about the same time in Nyasaland. The annual rate has varied in Fort Jameson District from three to ten shillings. The imposition of tax has been of importance, not only in partly meeting the costs of Administration, but also in bringing Ngoni men and women into the wider economic system of farms, mines and offices of southern Africa.

[illegible] of their important external relations. Politics, settlement, litigation, religion and economic activity have all been moulded by the Whites. In many respects this has been a passive process, for little that the Ngoni have done or not done has been significant to the decision to set up Native Courts, or to expand the production of tobacco, or even to open up a mission of some new denomination.

[1] By Ordinance No. 33 of 1929. Subsequent legislation is contained in Ordinances No. 10 of 1936, 18 of 1940, and 21 of 1942.

[2] Legislation is to be found in Ordinances No. 13 of 1912, 11 of 1924, 13 of 1933 and 14 of 1933.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

7. *Villages*

Throughout Ngoni history the village has been an easily recognizable residential unit. Many of the pre-conquest villages, particularly those which were headquarters of major segments, were large clusters of huts with thousands of inhabitants. Although there are none of comparable size to-day, the concept of the village remains. The bulk of the present Ngoni rural population live in discrete clusters of huts housing between fifty and two hundred people. These we call villages. Each village is spatially distinct from the next, and generally is surrounded by garden land and bush.

The post of headman of a single village has never been very important in the scheme of administration. Under the 1903 scheme, district headmen were appointed in charge of groups of villages. After 1916 this term was dropped in favour of minor chief, sub-chief or headman of a group of villages. The men referred to by these names were the people who became county chiefs. Below them no individuals were appointed as leaders of social groups. From at least 1904 onwards there were men called district messengers who carried ornamental spears as badges of office and who carried out the instructions of the Native Commissioner. They had the functions of policemen and messengers, although some of them were heads of villages in their own right. In 1916, the title of these men was changed to divisional headmen, and they were described as being heads of groups of villages. Nevertheless, at least among the Ngoni, most divisional headmen continued to act merely as messengers and police, and leadership of groups of villages continued to rest with the variously styled minor chiefs. After 1929 the work of divisional headmen was taken over partly by the Native Authority messengers and partly by land messengers, who are Government (Boma) messengers sent to live rurally from time to time.

[illegible] Administrative significance, the village has always been an important social group. We have seen that even in pre-conquest times, when the State as a whole was much more concentrated spatially than it is now, the fact of common residence was of significance within the segmentary residential system. The village had a central cattle byre. Its headman was known by a special term and once a primal segment had grown to village size the segment name was not applied to any residual segment within the headquarters village. The policy of the Administration, combined with a change in kinship relations among the tribe (a change from the quasi-

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Apart from the fact that the head of the segment is, or once was, a member of the royal lineage, there is little difference between a cadet segment and a commoner one. The majority of segments in the system as a whole have been founded by commoners and the majority of extant villages are the headquarters of commoner segments. Before the conquest, one of the principal mechanisms for ensuring the spatial dispersal of an expanding population was the formation of new large villages, the headquarters of segments formed for bevies of queens. After the conquest a comparatively stationary population has dispersed not under the leadership of queens but by the formation of new segments by commoners, not all of them even lieutenants of their lords.

Some indication of the distribution of present-day villages among these various types is given in Table VII. This table is based on 82 village histories collected in the general course of fieldwork. The villages were selected casually and arbitrarily, without reference to this particular problem. I also collected the histories of several counties, in the course of which I became acquainted with other village histories. I have excluded these from the sample to avoid weighing it too heavily with capital and chief's villages, whose names are mentioned in county histories. In consequence, the sample contains no chief's village at all. It also contains too few villages that have come into Ngoniland from other tribal areas, as can be seen by comparing it with Table IV (p. 118). Nevertheless it should serve to show the rough orders of magnitude.

It will be seen that about four out of five at the present time are commoner villages, and that about half of these were already in existence as distinct villages in 1898. On the other hand, seven out of the nine royal villages in the sample were founded before 1898.

Apart from the six incoming villages and the two founded by a labour immigrant and Administrative action, all the villages in the sample have some segment of the old ressonnal system, or its modern equivalent, as their core. Most of the commoner villages have been formed by the differentiation of a quasi-relative, cognatic or affinal relative from his lord. By contrast, most royal villages have been formed by differentiation between bevies of co-wives or between sons and their fathers.

In pre-conquest times there was a dogma that the chief owned all the cattle in the tribe. This dogma related to the structural position of the chief as head of the highest segment, and therefore in authority over the State and its resources rather than to the day-to-day care and disposal of cattle. There were cattle in each village

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

kind are referred to the Administration, it may sometimes act in the way desired by the chief and his lieutenants. Thus a chief once discovered his wife in bed with a lover. The man was eventually caught, and there were some who urged that he be hanged right away, for no one would tell the Administration about the matter. However, more cautious counsels prevailed, the incident was referred to the Administration, and the man was sentenced, in accordance with the wishes of the chiefs and their lieutenants, to three months' imprisonment. On his release, he was escorted from Ngoniland by a chief. Later the man returned, only to be driven out again. The Administration is concerned with upholding the position of chiefs, and in situations of this kind may regard, say, adultery with a chief's wife as more heinous that with a commoner's wife. On the other hand, the Administration cannot be relied on to give its support automatically, and for this reason chiefs and lieutenants may decide to act without reference to it. The Administration has even on occasion awarded damages to a commoner against the Paramount Chief.

It is perhaps significant that a minor chief whose county contained a comparatively large number of villages from the segments of other counties and whose claims to the county chieftainship was disputed decided to hold a meeting to discuss county affairs not at his court or at his village but at the capital of the county. He may have hoped to quell dissension by emphasizing the links with the pre-conquest past shared by the majority of his people.

Now that chiefs and others have begun building in burnt brick, it may be that newly acceded chiefs may not find it so easy to found their own villages. At the same time the policy of building other public buildings in brick, such as treasuries and the proposed welfare halls, in the vicinity of existing courts, may give increased importance to the Native Authority centre. Already there have [illegible] for the needs of litigants, and it seems likely that the effective social centre of the county will in future be the site of the Native Authority rather than the capital village or the home of the chief.

8. *Politics and the courts*

The day-to-day work of the court takes up much of the time of chiefs, assessors, and senior lieutenants of the chief. General discussion of Ngoni law lies outside the particular theme of this book, but we are here concerned with the courts in so far as they form part of the political system of the tribe. That there is a close connexion

water and the pyre, he was refusing, saying 'No, not in these days, but formerly.'

When Magona Ngozo was with Cikusi he was staying with him in the daytime. Magona had his own huts and Cikusi his. When eating, Cikusi ate alone, but afterwards he gave food to Magona. When Cikusi was washing it was together with Magona. When he went to the bush, they went together. When Cikusi was washing with the *tonga*, he was doing it with Magona. When the warriors were going out, Cikusi and Magona stood together, and they made fire for the medicines and they stood together in the smoke and then the warriors went out. So, when mentioning Magona, they said: 'the shadow of Cikusi'. When they were eating in the *bwalo*, the *nsima* (porridge) was brought to Cikusi, but if some *alumuzana* came, the wives of Magona cooked *nsima* and gave it to the *alumuzana*. When Cikusi died, Magona could take his wives if he wanted. The Ngozo man could tell the Paramount anything, good or bad, and stay like the mouth of the Paramount.

When the Paramount died formerly, the Ngozo man dressed in his war-dress. When he came near the fire he danced with the shield in his hand. When the fire blazed up he ran and jumped on the fire. So the Maseko people gave cattle to the Ngozo people, to quieten their hearts because they were brothers. And when another Paramount was installed they gave an Ngozo man to stand with him. The father of the man who died with the Paramount received cattle and villages to rule over and gifts. The Paramounts gave cattle because they said: 'Since our brother is going to stand with the Paramount, if that Paramount dies, he also will be killed, so the Paramount ought to give cattle like *lobola* so they may quieten the hearts of his brothers.' Though these cattle are not given for a woman but for a man, any Maseko man ought not to marry an Ngozo woman because there is this brotherhood.

And this man of the Ngozo clan was like a chief because he had men to manage his affairs at his door, as did the Paramount. And if he died his funeral was like that of a chief. But the day the Paramount died the Ngozo man was killed. When the Paramount washed with medicines, he was washing with the Ngozo man. When drinking beer, he was drinking in the same hut as the Paramount. When the Paramount was sacrificing he was together with the Ngozo man, and they did not leave each other.

The Ngozo people have a thanking name (*izibongo*) Maphonya. It is they who were standing with the Paramounts, and the Ngozo people were in the section of Ziyembe. Their avoidances were the same as all the Ngoni, especially fish and elephant. When Cikusi died Gulo stood with Gomani when he entered the chieftainship. Gulo was the son of Magona.

The royal village and the daily routine of the Paramount

In Part I, Chapter II we referred to the process by which each Paramount, after his accession, went out from his father's village to build his own. The Ngoni called this *ukupumisa inkosi* (to send out the Paramount) and the term used for the new village, *lusengulu* (the needle), was said to signify 'the front village where you expect to find the Paramount'.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Dr. Kuper described the Swazi king making his own capital, but referred also to the existence of several royal villages where the wives of the reigning king lived.[1] The Ngoni system of one royal village which went out from the former royal village resulted in a series of social groups, based on residence, which were related to past Paramounts and their widows and to present Paramounts and their wives. The diagram in Chapter III of Part I shows a very much simplified form of the component parts of a new royal village and their relationship illustrated by the siting of the huts.

The following text was given by an elderly widow of a grandson of Zwangendaba, in the head village of Chief Mperembe in the northern kingdom.

¶ When a new village, *lusungulu*, was built the *indlunkulu* was first erected and then followed all the other huts of the *inkosi* in order. Those huts which belonged to the *indlunkulu* took the right-hand side facing the kraal. The second house took the left-hand side, and all huts belonging to this one followed it. Such huts could be counted as belonging to the *indlunkulu* and the second house by the cattle that were taken from such houses. To marry a new wife, if the *inkosi* took cattle from the right-hand house that new wife would belong there. All the huts of each house of the *inkosi* were built at the back of the hut of the owner of that house.

When erecting huts, those of the *izinduna* came next and were built next to those of the *inkosi*. After that they built their own according to their *izigawa* or divisions.

All the huts at the back of the *indlunkulu* and behind the other huts were called *cigodlo*. Huts near the gate of the kraal at the left were called *kwa cikulu*.

[This text brings out the fact that each new royal village had three main elements in it: the mothers of the Paramount, his wives, and the *izinduna* and their families. The Paramount was always accompanied to his new village by one or more wives of his father, *ukulondolosa mntwana* (to keep the son). One of these was usually his own mother and she occupied the *indlunkulu*. The text points out that the big wife of the Paramount was on the right of the *indlunkulu*, and closely associated with its owner, the Paramount's mother.

There was no fixed rule for the number of *izinduna* in charge of the houses of the Paramount's mothers and wives. When the Ngoni kingdoms were established in Nyasaland, the royal villages were very large and the divisions of the village, called in the text *izigawa*, were small hamlets. Each division was generally identified with a house, and in that case the *induna* in charge of the house was also in charge of the division. The original composition of royal villages could only be reconstructed by tracing the relationships of separate villages in the 1930's to their former parent village. This will be illustrated in the next chapter on the

[1] Kuper, H. op. cit. p. 41.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

royal women. In the royal villages in the 1930's there was one big *induna* and several lesser ones whose position and functions will be described in Chapter IV.

This 'going out' of the new Paramount's village, leaving the former Paramount's village as the *gogo* village, brought about some re-distribution of authority, prestige and material goods. It gave the new Paramount his own village, always to be known as his, even after his death. His village became the focal meeting-place for the territory and for the court and territorial officials who surrounded the Paramount; and it was to the new royal village that the *alumuzana* in pre-European days came frequently to visit the Paramount and report to him on conditions in their areas. His moving out of the *gogo* village, on the other hand, gave his brothers who stayed there, and especially those of the *gogo* house, more freedom and authority within that village as well as responsibility for the conduct of all ritual matters relating to the kingdom. The Paramount's big wife had to take her place as the leading woman in the new village and to order the affairs of the wives attached to her house in consultation with the Paramount's mother. Cattle, beer and food for the royal household became the concern of the new village, and the *izinduna* and the royal women had to plan and manage the economy of a capital where political interests converged and where visitors and hangers-on were constantly turning up.

The following text by Chief Mtwalo Jere in Mzimba district, helped by Cibambo's older brother, describes the daily routine of the Paramount and his royal village as they had known it in their youth before the coming of the Europeans:

¶ The *inkosi* had to wash very early before the people came to see him. The *ingceko* was the servant who took care of washing the *inkosi*. He had to go with the *inkosi* to the bush and hide the faeces to prevent any bad person from getting the faeces. The *ingceko* was anyone whom the *inkosi* called for this, and must be one who walks well with the *inkosi*.

Before leaving his house to go to the kraal the *inkosi* had to eat a little porridge. When he went to the kraal a calabash of beer was brought to him. When any beer was brought to the *inkosi*, the *ingceko* tasted it first to see if it was good. The *inkosi* asked 'Is it good beer?' and the *ingceko* said 'Yes *inkosi*' and gave it to the *inkosi* to drink. When the *inkosi* took snuff the big *alumuzana* could beg from him. The other *amadoda* could only touch their noses. Then the *inkosi* knew they were begging snuff from him. Where the *inkosi* sat a mat was spread, and on it was laid a leopard- or a lion-skin. This was called 'the chair of the *inkosi*'. On arrival the big *alumuzana* went straight into the kraal to where the *inkosi* sat and greeted him '*Bayete*', and sat down in front of him.

The *inkosi* could not eat porridge except that cooked by his own wives. In his own hut he ate alone with one wife to serve him. His mothers also came with food every day. He ate twice in his own hut, early and late, and once in the kraal. When he ate in the kraal all could see him. He could

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

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when eating meat. The lesser wives sat on the ground, which was cleaned and smeared often with cow's dung.

The second *induna* of the village was the one who put the meat on the *ingcwembe*, or big platter of the *inhosikazi*, and placed it before her. She herself or her *nhlanzi* (co-wife) divided the meat for the other women, the wife of the *induna* helping her. After they had eaten, each *inhosikazi* called for an *ingcwembe* from her house for the meat to be given to her attendants.

The Life of the Royal Women
by NaNdumbu

formerly the big wife of the late Chief Njolomole Nzunga I in the central kingdom

« Old Njolomole had many wives, great and small. His huts were well made, and in the middle was the 'big house'. They made a fence to go round all the huts, and its appearance was very good. [361 351]

He was fond of sitting on the *bwalo*, and all his wives cooked *nsima* and took many baskets to the *bwalo*. He himself ate alone, but afterwards gave food to the big people and they in turn to the children who were waiting on the *bwalo*. If a stranger came, he did not lack food, for the chief gave food to strangers and beer. So all strangers praised his behaviour. And he was known far and wide in the land for his comely behaviour. [574]

When the days for *ngoma* were near he was going to the stores to buy many cloths to divide them to all his wives. Especially he was giving them to NaNdumbu his big wife to divide. Those cloths were all of one kind. On the day of dancing *ngoma* all the women wore these cloths and came on the *bwalo* with the chief. The people were astonished to see the women dressed alike. Njolomole excelled among all the people, and all praised him.

In the hut of NaNdumbu there were girls to sweep and to pound, and NaNdumbu was just sitting, no pounding for her.

Njolomole was very fond of hunting and when he killed animals in the hunt he divided them among his wives. Then he died and left his wives. From that time his wives have been very poor, and some have gone away to their own homes. Those who are here have been married by other men. Although the men dance *ngoma*, those women cannot dance it because they were greatly praised when they danced with fine cloths, but they cannot dance with poor cloths, no. So when people dance they just look on. Those women can dance *ngoma* in other villages, but here in their own village, no. Because they grieve very much to see the tomb of their husband who was dancing with them.

The Clothing of Women
by Yesaya Cibambo

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« Today Ngoni women are not easily recognised because they have taken foreign customs of clothing. Long ago Ngoni women were easily distinguished by their hair. They did not shave their hair except when their husband died. It was washed carefully and oiled and combed upwards to the top of the head in the *isikhato*. The oil was *ipuhla*, clarified butter. This was done every two or three days, or every day if they were grand women. They decorated it with small strings of beads dangling from a [301]

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

diagram is that of the *madoda*, the older men who wore the head-ring. Probably in pre-European days they received more recognition than was apparent in the 1930's after the head-ring had been given up. The *madoda* will be referred to in the next chapter on the royal village and in Chapter V of Part III on age sets. In the appeal court of the Paramount and in the chief's court there was always a group of these senior men sitting behind the *izinduna*, to whom the *induna* speaking to the case sometimes turned for advice and consultation.

Reference was made to an overlap between territorial office-bearers and national office-bearers. The big *izinduna*, the spokesman of the Paramount, and sometimes the messengers, were members of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, and often were *ahumuzana* who had no courts. This was a method by which in the 1930's those *ahumuzana* could be drawn into the circle of officials and receive a small salary for their services.

This set of office-bearers which we have considered in relation to the Paramount, with the exception of his spokesman and his praiser, was duplicated for the chiefs in both kingdoms, whether they were of the royal clan or *ahumuzana*. The account of the royal village in the central kingdom which follows in the next chapter will illustrate how these officials functioned in the day-to-day affairs of the Paramount's headquarters.

CHAPTER V

A ROYAL VILLAGE AFTER 1933

The Paramount and his village

For some weeks in 1935 and in 1936 I lived in the Paramount's village of Magangu in the central kingdom. The central kingdom included all Ncheu district, consisting of 1,092 square miles, a total population of 88,446, and a density of 80·99 per square mile. The village was 300 yards off the main road running from north to south of Nyasaland, and was approached by a hoed motor road flanked by huts. It consisted of three main sections: the Paramount's large brick residence and the surrounding buildings within a palisade or reed fence, including the huts of his daughter and son-in-law, and of his brother-in-law and sister; the huts and kraal in the section of the *induna* of his big house, Kalilombo Mbewe; and the huts and kraal of the original village 'owned' by the headman, Lazaro Dzonzi. On the south of the village was the large open space where the weekly market was held, and where several Indian stores faced the main road. On the north was the dispensary building,

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

and the circular court-house in a commanding position on a small hill with a big open space all round it.

There were several places in this village which were referred to as the *bwalo*: they included the open space within the reed fence of the Paramount's section, the much larger open and unfenced space round the court-house, and the more restricted spaces round the huts of the *induna* and of the headman. The meaning of the term *bwalo* was always slightly ambiguous in this village since it was often used for the verandah of the royal residence, as well as the open space in front of it. The central Ngoni custom of surrounding the huts of important men and women with high reed fences with a narrow opening, made it easy to say '*ali pa bwalo*', 'he is on the *bwalo*', so that it covered either the verandah of the hut or the space inside the fence. The local usage of *bwalo* by the Cewa people more often denoted the open space in the middle of the village where the men congregated to sit and talk and drink beer.[1] The connotation of *bwalo* in Ngoni villages in the central kingdom was usually in terms of the big house and the space in front of it within the fence.

In Magangu the place to which the name *bwalo* was most often applied was the space within the reed fence surrounding the Paramount's large brick residence and the outbuildings. When I lived in one of the outbuildings at the back of the house, I was said to be living *pa bwalo*; and it was also alluded to as *pa cigodlo*, that is in the enclosure where the Paramount's children lived behind the big house. His daughter's hut was in this section, on the north side, and beyond her hut was that of the *mlomo wenkosi*, who was also the Paramount's brother-in-law, since he had married the Paramount's sister and was the brother of the Paramount's wife. In the other buildings within the reed fence lived several servants of the household, and at the kitchen end of the brick house lived the girls who assisted the Paramount's wife with cooking and looking after her younger children.

When the Paramount built his court-house, he built some offices as part of it for himself, his *mlomo wenkosi*, his treasurer and the court clerk. The intention had been that official business would be carried out there, and relieve the big house of some of its many callers, and also ensure some measure of privacy for those who lived there. It proved very difficult to achieve this separation of public and private affairs, since the tradition that the Paramount was accessible to all his people at all times was persistent.

The entrance to the enclosure or *bwalo* of the big house was guarded in the traditional manner. If strangers (and all visitors were called *alendo* or strangers) arrived on the side road leading off the main road, they inquired from one of the huts there if the headman was present and waited till he arrived. The headman then went to tell the *induna* or the *mlomo wenkosi* that strangers had come, while they waited till the reply

[1] Scott, D. C. *Mang'anja Dictionary*. Edinburgh, 1892.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

797 643 In 1921 he was baptized by the Rev. J. Botes in the year in which he entered the chieftainship, when Cakumbira, the one who took care of the chieftainship, had died. For entering the chieftainship there was not much to be done. The people gathered together, and the Paramount just stood up and grasped his spear and pointed to the south-east. The people danced *ligubo* and praised the Paramount.

The people began to consider and said 'Seeing that he is a young man, how will he know how to judge the cases?' Ha! But there was confusion in their minds, because his judgements excelled those of the big people who had judged formerly. From 1921 to today in all matters he has the chieftainship and Christianity. He holds both these in his hand to strengthen him.

361 643 The texts bring out several points relative to the royal village which arose from the circumstances surrounding the early life of the Paramount. Reference has already been made to the large royal village on Domwe which broke up when Cikusi entered the Paramountcy and built his *lusungulu* village at Liwisini near the Kirk Range. The section of the royal village called Lizulu moved out almost due east from Domwe under its big *induna*, Cakumbira Ndau. When Gomani I was killed after a brief reign of five years, the Ndau clan brought to their village the big wives of Gomani I, including NaMagagula his first wife, in whose house the child Philip Gomani was brought up. With the big *induna* of Lizulu of the Ndau clan was Mambeyu Moyo, one of the big war *izinduna* of Cikusi. Lizulu, with NaMagagula living there, was regarded as the *gogo* village of the Paramount, and from there his own *lusungulu* village went out to build at Magangs where there was already a village under a headman of the local tribe. One of the reasons given for building on a village site already occupied was that the Portuguese frontier restricted all movements to the west, and round the village of Lizulu to the east and south a number of outlying villages were already in existence. Proximity to the main north to south Nyasaland road was also considered a good reason for building the Paramount's village on the site at Magangs. Lizulu village had two important aspects. It was the *gogo* village of the Paramount, and it was also the head village of the Ndau clan, and the court of Chief George Ndau who was one of the S.N.A.

643 [797] The conversion of the Paramount to Christianity was a severe blow for the older officials in his kingdom. They feared that much of the ritual associated with the office of the Paramount would necessarily disappear and that the Ngoni kingdom would become weakened in consequence. Three events partly allayed these fears though the older men were never wholly reconciled. One was his marriage to NaNdau, daughter of Cakumbira Ndau who had hidden him, thus binding the royal line to the powerful Ndau clan which had protected him in his childhood. Another was the recognition in 1933 by the Nyasaland government of the Paramountcy with its Appeal Court. The third was

CHAPTER III

HOUSES

361 171 823 WRITING of the social organization of the northern Nguni among the South-eastern Bantu, Mrs. Hoernlé[1] referred to three divisions of the typical village: the *indlunkulu* section where the principal hut was that of the mistress of the village; the *ikhohlo* section on the left-hand side of this hut, and the *inqadi* section on the right. The terminology used by the northern Nguni expressed right and left hand from the point of view of someone looking up from the gate of the kraal. I found that among the Ngoni they used right and left the other way as if the person were at the top of the kraal looking down at the gate, and I have adopted their usage.

171 361 554 Ngoni villages, which were royal villages or the head villages of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, also had a tripartite division into houses related to leading women, as we saw in the village plan in Chapter III of Part I, but there was a major difference between them and the northern Nguni grouping described by Mrs. Hoernlé. In Ngoni villages the *indlunkulu*, the hut at the head of the kraal, was occupied by the mother of the owner of the village, who had 'come out' with him from his father's village. In the right-hand section of the huts round the kraal was the hut of the owner's big wife, and on the left the hut of his next important wife. These three huts, representing three houses, were the focal points of the main divisions of the village. In fact in most villages the owner of the *indlunkulu* had the huts of other widows of her late husband beside her on each side, and the *cigodlo*, or section where the sons of the owner of the village lived, spread over a wide area behind the *indlunkulu* and behind the huts of the two chief wives. The plan used in Chapter III of Part I was necessarily simplified in order to bring out the main points. The grouping of huts in typical Ngoni villages showed varying degrees of elaboration, and it was not always easy at first to trace their connexions with the houses.

592 571 Houses in the Ngoni kingdoms could be considered as divisions of the village, though they did not always cover all the divisions. If we look at the membership of a house, as it was illustrated in a typical Ngoni village, it is clear that it had in it three elements connected by ties of kinship, affinity or association with the owner of the house, who was either a wife or a mother of the male owner of the village. The kinship group related to the *indlunkulu* comprised the male owner of the village, his mother and classificatory mothers with his brothers who had joined him. In the big house and in the second house of his wives the kinship

[1] *op. cit.* p. 89.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

group consisted of himself and the mother and her children, including her daughters only until they married.

The affinal element in a house consisted of the other wives associated with the owner of the house as co-wives, and the wives of the sons of the owner. Both the kinship group and the affinal group were bound together by their rights in the cattle of the herd which was known as 'the cattle of the house of X'. From that herd were taken cattle for the *lobola* of the wives married after the house was founded, and for the wives of the sons and adopted sons of the house. Into that herd came the cattle received for the marriages of the daughters belonging to the house and the gift cattle sent to wives by their fathers after marriage. When the *lobola* had been fully paid up for a daughter of the house, then her relationship with it ceased and she was thenceforth known as belonging to her husband's mother's house.

Associated with the house in the villages of the Paramounts, the chiefs and the leading *alumuzana* were two other groups of people. One was the *induna* appointed 'to take care of the house' and his family. In the 1930's the *induna* was in charge of the cattle and of the many activities connected with the house, including the organization of male labour in hut-building, in kraal construction and in cultivation; he was consulted by the male members of the house about the selling of cattle and the use of the goods accumulated in the house. The other group associated with the house in pre-European days consisted of captives taken in war and allocated to the house who worked as labourers. The servants who worked for a house in the 1930's assisted with cooking, beer-making and minding the children, and they had huts near that of the owner of the house to which they belonged, placed on the right- or left-hand side of the kraal according to their affiliation with the big house or the second house. Informants said that in the past such association with a house included giving a beast from the herd of the house for the marriage of a servant. The *induna*, through the marriage of his daughters, built up his own herd, which he frequently kept at first with the cattle of the house in the main kraal, later building his own kraal.

A new house began when a man married his big wife. Although at first he built her a hut at the back of his mother's hut in his father's village, as soon as he moved out to his new village after his father's death, the big wife's hut had the next most important site in the kraal after that of the *indlunkulu*, and the second wife had the third place of importance. In some of the larger villages of the central kingdom, the custom of moving out into a new village after the death of the former owner had been given up, partly because of pressure on the land. The house grouping in relation to the siting of huts then became very complex, but the pattern was nevertheless discernible. The two sections under the big house and the *gupo* house, which had formerly divided into two villages, continued to exist together, and at Mzakhatha this dual

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

pattern covered two generations including the houses of the former chief and the reigning one.

The houses served several purposes in the organization of village life on the one hand, and on the other, provided an important instrument for regulating succession and inheritance, and for carrying out traditional ceremonies and ritual. It was the eldest son of the second house who would, if the *lusungulu* practice was followed, remain behind with the *gogo* village; and he was responsible for conducting traditional ritual and was expected to be able to carry out ceremonial procedure correctly. This was the main function of the *gogo* village and of the man who was head of the male members of the *gogo* house. The corresponding head of the male members of the big house was the owner of the village, and it was his eldest son by his first wife who would normally succeed him as chief or *mulumuzana*. The members of each house had a stake in the property of that house, particularly in the herd of cattle owned by it, and in any goods, such as cloth, bought by the sale of the cattle of the house. The house united the male members who belonged to it through this common ownership of cattle. In Chapter II of Part IV we shall examine further this aspect of belonging to a house.

In the organization of village life in villages belonging to chiefs or *alumuzana* the houses established the status of the wives of the owner of the village, and the status of those of his mothers who had come with him. His mother in the *indlunkulu* hut ranked first among her co-widows. The big wife came next, and the wife of the second house after her. Wives attached to the big house ranked above those attached to the second house.

The houses fulfilled their most prominent role in the day-to-day activities of the households associated with them. It was in these daily activities and in planning for future events that the house organization provided the chief channels of authority. The exercise of this authority ranged from instruction in household tasks and emphasis on good standards of housekeeping to settling minor disputes arising from marital quarrels over property and over the custody of children. These minor cases could be settled out of court if the senior women showed that they knew how to listen to complaints and give advice which was accepted, with the result that good relations were restored. The main topics of discussion among the senior women on the verandah of the *indlunkulu* were the ingredients of these minor quarrels and disputes. If, by judicious handling, they could keep the cases out of court, they knew, and so did the village, that their authority was enhanced and their prestige more firmly established.

The authority of senior women was further reinforced through their organization of women's labour in household work and in cultivation. This authority in domestic affairs covered a woman's own household and the women and girls attached to it as household servants, the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

621 593 break up into smaller villages, and there were on the whole more villages in the north said to be *mubanja limodzi* (of one family) than among the central Ngoni. On the other hand, the *hungulu* pattern of village division had almost disappeared among the central Ngoni.

591 592 [361] A man on his first marriage built a hut for his wife behind his mother's hut, where his brothers by the same mother or by mothers of the same house also built. The family grouping by residence was therefore determined by house affiliation. Associated with this residential group based on kinship, there were the residences of the *induna* and his family which had separate alignments on a kinship basis, though for certain common purposes they combined with the family groups related to the house by kinship. The children of the families belonging to the house and the children of the *induna* who took care of it began to intermarry when the prohibitions on marriage within the village ceased to operate. In this way kinship bonds were created within a group which formerly had only residence and certain activities in common, and this process was recognizable in a number of the larger villages, especially in the central kingdom.

593 Within the different types of family groups determined by their residential basis there were certain outstanding relationships between members of the same family. The most important of these was that between father and children; the father, as the biological parent and also the symbol of authority, was the focus of honour and respect, and the one who helped his children when they were in need. The relation between the father and his children among the Ngoni was always a balance between affection and care, and respect and authority. The ideal pattern of a father, as described by informants, included all these elements and also wisdom. This concept of the father relationship was extended to the head of a *banja*, to the headman of a village or a section of a village, to a *mukumusana* in charge of an area, to a chief, and to the Paramount himself. The Ngoni greeting to all older men, and the most [592] respectful form of address to a man of any seniority, was *baba*, father, or its Nyanja equivalent *kambo*.

The mother, on the other hand, had a more limited relationship within the family circle. To her own children and to the children of her co-wives, especially of her house, she was the provider of food, and the affectionate 'cherisher'[1] of young children; but she was also treated with respect and, when she reached some seniority, she had considerable authority over her daughters and her younger co-wives. She could never compete, however, with the sisters of her husband or with his mothers, who expected to exercise authority over her children and to arrange for the ceremonies connected with birth, puberty, and marriage. [591] 18-4 In villages where virilocal residence was the rule, the husband's sisters were married elsewhere and were only present in the village during

[1] *kulera*, lit. to cherish, is the word used for bringing up children.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956

FR5 Ngoni FR5

Households[1]

	Total	Leading clan
Northern Ngoniland		
Eswazini	23	15
Endindeni	15	12
Eluhangeni	37	21
Central Ngoniland		
Cinkwita	39	18
Mangoso	60	26
Mcakhatha	122	37

The proportion of persons of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans in the central kingdom to the total population was lower than in the north. The figures given here, however, do not show the total number of persons of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, but only the households related on a kinship basis with the leading clan head.

Eswazini and Endindeni were both built in traditional Ngoni style in horse-shoe formation round a single kraal, with the *indlunkulu* at the head of the kraal, and a recognised right-hand and left-hand grouping. Eswazini had become the head village of the Sibande clan since its owner, Samson Sibande, on his father's death had gone out from his father's village and made this his *lusugulu* village. His big wife, of the royal clan, was in the *indlunkulu* to which she had succeeded on the death of his mother, and there was another wife on the right and left hand. Of the older generation there was only one widow of his father, belonging to the same house as his mother. Of his generation there were five brothers, one of the same mother as Samson, and four sons of the surviving widow of his father. There was also the widow of a dead brother by the same mother. Two sisters of Samson were in the village, one married to the *induna* of his mother's house, whose family lived on the right-hand side of the kraal, and one a deserted widow who had returned to her brother's protection. All the village was one house, that of Samson's own mother.

Endindeni was a *gugo* village owned by Zibekere Makwakwa who was the son of a famous war *induna* and was of the *gugo* house of his father. His brother, who was the son of the big house, had moved out to his own village. The village was composed entirely of his family with the exception of an age mate with whom he had an *ukuk* relationship, who lived with his two wives on the left-hand side of the kraal. Zibekere's big wife was in the *indlunkulu* to which she had succeeded on the death of his own mother, and his second wife was also of her house. Of the older generation there was one widow of his father, and one widow of his father's brother; of his own generation, one younger brother of the same mother. There were four sons of his big wife and two of his second

[1] In all six villages the total number of households included two or more kraals.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

wife. The village with its single kraal was 'of one house', and it was widely known as a good village by Ngoni standards, because, as the local people said, 'all the men are Makwakwa men'.

Eluhangeni was a *gugo* village where the spirit of Mtenje Jere, the son of a brother of Zwangendaba, was guarded. The kinship group of Mwanamdoko Jere, the owner of the village, were all of one house, that of his mother who was dead. Her place in the *indhuduhi* had been taken by his big wife who also inherited the guardianship of the spirit of Mtenje. There was one widow of his father in the village, but she had become a Christian and therefore could not guard the spirit. Mwanamdoko had two wives, and three widows of his brothers by the same mother were also in the village. One brother by another mother was the only one of his generation still alive and he had two sons and two grandsons living in the *cigodlo* behind the *indhuduhi*. All Mwanamdoko's family were grouped round one kraal. There were two other kraals with family groups round them in the village, one belonging to the *indhuna* of his dead mother, and one to an age mate who had been in his regiment. The *indhuna's* group belonged to the same house as Mwanamdoko, but the pattern of the three distinct groups each with its own kraal was more like that of the *banja* in the central kingdom.

In the central kingdom the relationships of the various groups in a village followed a different pattern from that in the north. Instead of the *kumagulu* and *gugo* characteristics where the family groups were integrated into houses, the southern pattern was that of a conquered village with the Ngoni element superimposed. In Cinkwita and in Mzukhatha the village headman and his family group had originally been conquered, then established as an outlying village, and finally chosen for the permanent settlement of a family group belonging to an Ngoni clan when they left the royal village after it broke up. In Cinkwita there were three kraals associated with three *banja*. Two of the *banja* belonged to kinship groups of Ntumba clans, and the head of one was known as the headman of the village. The head of the *banja* of Cinkwita Ndau, the Ngoni clan group, was his eldest son Wilkinson, whose wife was of a leading Swazi clan, the Magwagwa. His family group consisted of his wife, two sons and three daughters; a brother and his two daughters; the widow of a dead brother and his two sons and a daughter; three sisters, one of whom had married the brother of the village headman and one who was a widow; and a widowed sister of his father. This family grouping expressed in terms of households illustrates what has already been referred to several times, namely the tendency of the heads of leading Ngoni families in the central kingdom to keep, in addition to their sons, their sisters and daughters in the village after marriage, even when *lobolo* had been given. It also illustrates the comparatively small number of plural marriages in the south among the younger men.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

rocky outcrops. In September, several weeks before the rains begin, the trees burst out into red foliage, making scarlet rings and patches around the mountains and along the valleys, while through the hard-baked earth spring gladioli and orchids. This is the time of the bush fires when grass is burned and men and boys go hunting. The first rain storms bring a transformation. Fresh green grass covers the land, and scarlet leaves turn bright green on bushes and trees, and later marigolds turn the hillsides golden and yellow aroms and red-hot pokers appear along the roadsides.

In making this high plateau their home, the Ngoni chose it primarily for the pasture lands for their cattle. They sited their villages on the ridges or the slopes of the hills, where they had a commanding position, with access to water, good land for cultivation in the shallow dips and river valleys, and woodlands where they could cut poles for their houses and cattle kraals.

The traditional Ngoni village was built in a horse shoe formation round a circular cattle kraal. Larger villages had a central kraal with huts round it, and several other kraals each with its horseshoe grouping of huts. A large village, and there were many of over a hundred huts, seemed at first sight to be a sprawling collection of huts and kraals, with a few tall trees about and several red ant-hills. A pattern of hut sites became apparent, however, once the family and kinship grouping was known. Behind each hut was one or more circular grain stores built on platforms, large ones for maize and smaller ones for millet or ground-nuts. In the Central Ngoni kingdom, and sometimes in the Northern kingdom, there were tall reed fences round the huts of leading families, enclosing an open space where household work went on, and wood and grass were stored.

There were two focal points in each village, reproduced on a minor scale in the hamlets round each kraal. One was the "big house" at the head of the kraal, where the leading

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

105 senior men who related to me historial events, family genealogies, war-songs and other Ngoni traditional knowledge, including the ideas and methods of bringing up Ngoni children. In the evenings the schoolboys gathered by my hut to practise their English, to discuss their school work and their plans for the future. The tsetse menace had for some time been threatening the cattle and losses were considerable. The boys wanted above all to emigrate and find work so that they could earn money to send home to their fathers to buy more cattle, pay taxes, buy clothes, guns and ammunition, for it was lion country.

Out of the thirty-one households in the village, twenty-five belonged to the men of Ngoni clans. There were nine elderly widows of Ngoni leading families, and of the younger women eighteen were true Ngoni. There was therefore both among the men and the women, and in the senior and younger age-groups, a high proportion of those who were true Ngoni and who practised the Ngoni way of living. It was a village where Ngoni cultural patterns were very much in evidence, and where the school and the church, representing modern developments, were closely integrated with village life.

Enzakazeni was just off a main road and as easily accessible as Enkodlweni was remote. It was perched on a hill-top in a commanding position, and was much larger, with a hundred and twenty-two households compared with thirty-one. There were several kraals and many cattle, no tsetse menace, but lions in the neighbourhood which more than once attacked the kraal at night. Outsiders, that is of non-Ngoni clans, who had money, had married into the chief's and other leading families, and these households possessed well-built brick houses. I lived in a grass-and-pole hut inside a fence, near the compound of the big house. There was no school in the village, and the nearest one was run by a mission disliked by the leading Ngoni. The boys spent all their time with the cattle, or hunting or practising crafts.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

sieves for straining beer or water poured through ashes to make salt. These lay around all day if they were being used, and were periodically scrubbed and put on the rack to dry, and at night stacked tidily in the veranda. In the day-time sleeping-mats of finely woven fibre were brought out into the sun, and so were skins and cloths used as coverings at night. Some of the Ngoni used curved wooden headrests as pillows often carved at the ends with animals' heads to fascinate a small child.

On the polished space in front of the hut were laid from time to time mats on which sprouting millet for making beer was dried, or partly pounded damp maize. A young child was sometimes told to keep the fowls and dogs off these mats. These animals and often small kids, wandered and pecked and scratched and quarrelled inside the fence all day, and young children chased them.

Beyond the fence lay other fenced compounds grouped round the cattle kraal, and beyond the village buildings lay patches of woodland, grass pastures, cultivated 'gardens', and water-holes and streams. Going with the mother or grandmother or a nurse girl or helper to fetch water, or work in the gardens was an expedition for young children which they delighted in.

In these village surroundings there were some places forbidden to young children, who were corrected by everyone with smacks and stern reproofs until they learned to keep away. One such forbidden place was the kraal gateway where the men sat and talked and ate. No woman until she had passed the menopause was allowed to cross over in front of the gateway lest she injure the cattle. If therefore children strayed down there, younger women did not like to go and fetch them back, as the men always grumbled if women went there lest they should harm the cattle. It was nevertheless a place that had a great attraction for boys of five to seven years old, because they found their fathers there and the herd boys. The boys in this age-group of five to seven showed

[P.1]

CHAPTER I

MARRIAGE IN THE TIME OF PEACE

1. *The old social structure*

IN THE DAYS before the European conquest, the Ngoni people lived in large villages each containing hundreds of huts built round a central cattle byre. Each married woman had her own hut and there were separate dormitories for boys and for girls. The huts were grouped into small clusters, each containing the dwellings of a few close agnates with their wives and children under the leadership of the senior male agnate. If the leader of the cluster was an important person, captives taken in war were allocated to him and their huts were included in his own cluster. Clusters were grouped into divisions, each usually under the control of a village lieutenant. Within the same division the heads of clusters were either agnates of the lieutenant or were people who had been captured by him or his father or who had been allocated to him by the chief and who were therefore bound to him as quasi-kinsmen. Several divisions made up a village under a headman or a regional governor. The village lieutenants were dependents or former captives of the headman or his ancestors, and were allocated to their divisions by him. Some divisions were under the control of junior kinsmen of the headman. Each village was attached to a royal headquarters where there was a senior queen. This arrangement of clusters, divisions, villages, and royal headquarters, which I refer to as the residential system, seems to have been similar to that found to-day among the Swazi.[1]

The system was a growing one. Brothers brought up in the same cluster gradually achieved their independence and split off to establish clusters of their own. The heads of clusters grew in importance and were promoted to village lieutenants so that their clusters became divisions, while divisions grew too large to be contained within the villages and moved off to establish themselves as separate villages. This process of expansion did not in itself affect the formal hierarchy of authority. The lieutenant who established his own village as a distinct spatial entity still remained a lieutenant of his lord, and deferred to him in matters of importance. The same word[2] was used to refer to a division of a royal headquarters, a division of a village, and a cluster within a division. The relationships of superordination and subordination between persons remained the same despite changes in spatial separation.

[1] Cf. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 66.

[2] *Cigawo*, pl. *zigawo*, from *ku-gawa*, to divide.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FRS Ngoni FRS Mpezeni

to some extent in the marriages of those near him and on occasion took away a wife from one man and gave her as wife to another. Nzinga, the heir of Mpezeni I, once took a wife from one of the important men in his mother's royal village and made her his queen. The man committed suicide and Nzinga killed a beast to placate the anger of his mother's lieutenants. Such instances of intervention seem to have been rare and were disliked by the common people.

6. Polygyny

The pattern of growth of the residential system was determined by the grouping of children in the compound family. This grouping was in turn determined by the ranking of wives. It seems that the South-Eastern Bantu system of dividing wives into three groups, a great house and a left- and a right-hand house was not continued. Old men are agreed that in the past wives could be described as either left-hand or right-hand, but there is no agreement on the principles of this division. In discussing the wives of well-known men who flourished about this period, there was no consensus about which women were left-hand wives and which were right. The division cannot in any case have had the same spatial reference to the husband's cattle byre as among the South-Eastern Bantu, since the Ngoni lived in large villages with a central byre containing all the cattle of the village.

Wives were arranged into small groups which we may term 'bands'. A band might contain up to a dozen co-wives and was under the charge of its senior member. Wives in a band lived close to each other in the same cluster of huts. A man might have as many as five or six bands of wives, and the senior wife of one of the bands was the man's great wife, the mother of his heir. We have seen that a cross-cousin was inferior to an unrelated wife, and a wife from the same or related village inferior to one from afar. These two considerations, however, seem only to have influenced a man's choice of senior wives and did not themselves directly determine widely rank. Thus a man could if he wished make a cross-cousin from his own village his great wife or the senior wife of one of his bands, but most men did not do so. The first wife married with bridewealth was the great wife. If there was a wife married earlier for whom no bridewealth had been paid, perhaps a cross-cousin or a recently captured woman, then she became subordinate to the chief wife and was regarded as a member of her band. Wives married subsequently were attached to this band until the husband decided to start another band. He took either one of the wives of his great wife's band or else a newly acquired wife, and established a new cluster of huts for her. Some other members of the great wife's band might be transferred to the new band, as subordinates of the newly promoted wife. As the man continued to take new wives they were allocated to one or other of the existing bands. If the husband was an important man he allocated to each

[P.19]

CHAPTER II

PROCESSES OF CHANGE

1. White conquest

THE SOCIAL system which we have so far described flourished in an environment in which the Ngoni people were separated from other tribes by a no-man's-land. Ngoni raiding parties crossed this tract and returned with captives, food and some cattle. The only other contacts with the outside world were with Arab slave-traders and their agents who exchanged slaves and ivory for cloth and guns, and with a few white and half-caste traders and explorers. In 1898 the Ngoni army was defeated by a force under British leadership and many villages were burnt down. Very many of the cattle were looted and the people dispersed. A White township was built in the middle of the Ngoni kingdom, the warriors were disarmed, and an administrative system was established involving both Whites and Ngoni. Missionaries arrived, schools were opened, labour recruiters and later tobacco planters began their activities.

We are not concerned here with the total effect of this sequence of events but only with the results it has had on marriage. We can distinguish a number of fields in which processes initially external to the indigenous society began to impinge on it and to become part of it. The establishment of White control brought to an end the Ngoni wars. The building up of the Cewa chieftainships contiguous to Ngoni country affected the whole scheme of values held by Ngoni people at the same time as those values were being altered by the intrusion of White technology, political offices, legal concepts, and religions. The physical dispersion of the people in the face of the British troops was followed by a greater dispersion of men, and later of women and children as well, over the mining centres of Southern Rhodesia and the Copperbelt.

The large villages which formed the core of the residential system were burnt, and their inhabitants never all came together again. At first people lived in small settlements of three or four grass shacks built in the hills or in the bush. Gradually the people gathered together in distinct villages, but their population was different in structure from that of the former villages. The groupings of people which stayed together after 1898 represented the smallest fragments of the residential system, and these small fragments collected together into larger associations which were related to, but by no means coincident with, the larger segments of the old system. Some segments left the area and rejoined the tribes from whence they

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
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Case history 1

Amon[*] was married to Eve and wished to offer bridewealth for her. Amon's father prevented him, saying that the marriage of Amon's sister with Eve's father's son had not yet proved a success and and he did not want at this stage to bind himself any further to Eve's kindred.

There are no exogamous clans among the Ngoni but sometimes an agnatic lineage has a distinctive descent-name, giving it the appearance of an exogamous clan. Kinship terms are used within the lineage and members may not marry one another. As, however, descent is not usually traced, either actually or putatively, beyond the grandparents of adults these exogamous groupings are small and do not persist in time.

Tribal preferences are not marked. In the past the Ngoni were prepared to capture and incorporate into their society anyone who came in their path. At the same time there was an association of South-Eastern Bantu origin with high rank, although this was never developed into a rigid system of ethnic ranking. Nowadays Ngoni live in the midst of people from other tribes, in the adjacent reserves, on the tobacco farms, in Fort Jameson township and at the urban centres. A man may sometimes be ridiculed if he marries a Cewa girl but many men do so, particularly if they live in Cewa-speaking villages under Ngoni chiefs. Wealthy Cewa men from Cewa chiefdoms who wish to bequeath their property to their sons sometimes marry Ngoni women and offer bridewealth for them, hoping thereby to prevent their sister's sons disputing the inheritance. There are many men on farms and in the township coming from distant areas whose tribe may be uncertain or unknown but who manage to marry Ngoni girls. The only strong antagonism is against the Nyasaland Yao. Yao find it difficult to marry into aristocratic Ngoni families and even when they do their rights are never certain. The Yao are regarded by the Ngoni as clever sorcerers and are thought to have an excess of sexual vigour.

A few women become the concubines of European or Indian men. Such unions lack much of the substance of marriage, although the man sometimes makes a present to the woman's relatives which is interpreted as a marriage payment. These men are not usually concerned with establishing the validity of the marriage, if marriage it is. They cannot take action against their wives in the Native Courts, nor can they hope for redress in the Administration's courts. Although the Administration assists women to secure maintenance of the children, it does not recognise these unions as legal marriages. In vernacular speech they are referred to as marriages and, despite the protestations in recent years of more sophisticated Africans, these women are not despised in the rural areas. A woman who

[*] All personal names in this paper are fictitious. I have used Biblical names as these are common among the Ngoni. Where an individual is mentioned in more than one case history I have retained the same fictitious names throughout.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Mpezeni

related to him but her participation was explained in terms of her status as an 'important person' and not in terms of this relationship.

A man can move from his village to his wife's village if he or she has quarrelled with his kinsfolk, and a quarrel with her relatives may cause them to move in the reverse direction. These shifts from one kind of residence to another occurred in a different context in the old system. We have seen that there was sometimes a change from matrilocal to virilocal residence, for at the beginning of his first marriage a man might leave his wife living matrilocally until he had paid bridewealth. If there was a quarrel between a man and his wife's kin at this stage, they might try to delay his taking the woman to his own village, although they could not entirely prevent him from so doing. Hostility found expression in the desire to keep him under close surveillance, not in the desire to be rid of him. This old idea still persists to some extent, as we have seen in the story of Abner and Esther (p. 79). Esther wanted her husband Abner to live in her village so that her father could see that he looked after her well. A man may refuse to allow his daughter to move to her husband's village until he is satisfied that the young man is a good husband. This line of action, however, now applies only at the beginning of a marriage and in families where a man is determined to maintain his control over his growing children. When there is a quarrel involving a couple who have been married for a long time, it is then too late to hope that a man will improve his behaviour under the eye of his wife's father. If he quarrels with his father-in-law it is better that he should go and live in his own village.

The significance of the reverse move, from virilocality to matrilocality, was different in the old system from what it is in the new. In the light of what we know of the South-Eastern Bantu and by reference to the present position among the Ngoni it seems probable that in the old days it did happen from time to time that a man sought refuge with his wife's agnates. Yet from the dearth of instances of this in my genealogical material it would seem that this cannot have occurred very often. Once a man had established himself in virilocal residence he usually stayed there. If he quarrelled with his kinsfolk all he could do was to move off and make his own segment distinct from those of his brothers; he could not seek permanent shelter with his wife's kinsfolk. Nowadays he can do so, and it may be easier for him to change to matrilocal residence than to try to form his own group. In the old days the transition from what we now call a cluster to a division or from a division to a village was a gradual one. Spatial separation between minor segments of the same order was initially a matter of yards and with successive moves in the tribal migrations became a matter of miles. Nowadays there is a definite number of villages recognized by the Administration and a man who establishes his own residential cluster of huts is, or at least was until very recently, in danger of punishment for not living in a recognized village. For many years there was an

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Administrative ruling that no new village could be started without a minimum of ten taxpayers, and earlier it was the policy of the Administration to decrease the number of independent villages. These policies have now changed, and throughout the period there have always been devices for lessening their effect, but it is still true that sometimes the easiest way for a man to flee from his kinsmen is to build his hut in his wife's village.

Case history 14

Samuel's father was headman of a village. Samuel married in the village and had four sons by his wife before she died. His second wife lived with him virilocally and after she had borne two children she committed adultery with one of Samuel's elder brothers. Samuel divorced her and married a third wife who died soon after. Samuel accused his brothers of killing his first and third wives by sorcery. He married a fourth wife and went to live in her village, taking with him his four sons by his first wife and the elder child by his second wife. He is still registered at his father's village and attends there whenever the District Officer tours the area, but he has little to do with his brothers.

In this way the movements of men and women between villages reflect the struggles between kinsfolk and between affines. Besides the formation of new villages, which goes on despite obstacles placed in the way, there is a continual reshuffling of the elements making up the existing villages. Through marriage a man acquires affines and through them places where he can live if he wants to do so. This change in the structure of the village is therefore related to the new rule of villages in the administrative scheme, the new rules for their formation, and the new kinds of movement from one village to another. By reason of his marriages the number of moves that a man can make if need be is increased.

3. Polygyny

The other important structural change that has been directly related to external influences is the decreased incidence of polygyny. In olden days a man acquired dependants in two ways, by begetting them and by capturing them. Wealth consisted of cattle and dependants, and the well-remembered names of the past are those of patriarchs with dozens of wives whose offspring now form the core of many villages. Nowadays the missions oppose polygyny, wealth can be acquired in other ways than by the marriage of daughters, and a variety of relatives with different genealogical ties can be gathered round one as dependants. It is rare to find a man with as many as five wives. With the decline in polygyny the system of ranking that was used to organize large compound households has fallen into decay, and except when the issue has been complicated by the payment of bridewealth, wives are simply ranked in chronological order of marriage. With the increased importance

* So genealogy, p. 81.

The people in the original area were short of food but by no means at starvation level. This was ascertained by taking seven sample villages at random within the congested area and weighing their entire food stocks during the first fortnight of February. From these samples the following data were obtained.

Grain Stocks of Seven Ngoni Villages
(February 1941)

Total population			Total grain stocks
Men	Women	Children	lb.
292	389	531	24,719

Making no allowance for a special reserve of seed against a possible need for replanting, or for loss in preparing flour and for other reasons, the grain stock represents not more than 20 days usage, and supplies would probably be exhausted by early March. There was much variation between villages; one exceptional village had enough grain for 46 days while in another the grain stocks represented only 4 days supply. It will be remembered, however, that in an African social system, kinship obligations tend to even out the distribution of food supplies.

In striking contrast to these samples, a village which had recently made an illicit move to unoccupied private land was found to have, at the end of February, grain stocks representing 81 days supply. The effects of falling yields first make themselves felt in the bad years and it should be noted that the sampling was done in a year following a good climatic season. It will also be noted that villages which would in all probability have reached the starvation level had already transferred themselves.

There is, then, a time lag between the beginning of over-crowded conditions and the point at which obvious symptoms of land degeneration and soil erosion appear. The length of this time lag clearly depends on a number of factors acting together; the type of land and the system used on it, the degree of congestion, the original population density and the rate of population increase, if any. A further variable time lag elapses before conditions of general food shortage are reached. Under some conditions the process of land degradation may result in food shortage within a very few years, while in other cases this result may not appear for twenty years or more.

Within ten years of the creation of reserves in the Mkushi District obvious land degradation and recurrent food shortages in some areas had reached such a stage as to attract the attention of District Officers, missionaries and other interested persons, and to create an insistent demand for additional land. The population densities in these areas were 18 to 25 persons per square mile. Other areas of the Territory, notably the reserves of the

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Mpezeni Lamba 08 Maravi FR4

rence of sleeping sickness or for other reasons. It would have been possible by re-distribution of populations within the old Reserves, in conjunction with provision of water supplies and measures against 'fly', materially to reduce the number of people to be moved to unoccupied land. Such a course would have involved serious political repercussions and, in view of the amount of land available, it was never contemplated.

The next essential step was to survey the vacant land available for resettlement, to prepare vegetation-soil maps of the areas, and to estimate the carrying capacity of each area for the traditional agricultural system of the people who would occupy it. In the Eastern Province and the Ndola District surveys were made on the basis of parallel straight line traverses, using liquid prismatic compasses and cyclometer wheels. Traverse lines were usually one mile apart, but wider intervals up to three miles were used, in order to save time, if the country was relatively uniform or if no high degree of accuracy was required. In some instances, when very accurate maps were wanted, the traverse interval was reduced to one half or one quarter of a mile. Information on water supplies, the state of regeneration of land and timber, the former inhabitants and other relevant details, was collected in the course of these surveys. In the case of Mkushi District, where there was an abundance of available land in relation to the needs of the population, sample traverses only were used. The methods of survey and mapping are described in one of the other papers in this series.

When estimates had been made of the number of people to be moved from each of the over-crowded chiefdomships and the carrying capacity of the available land, divided into convenient areas, had been ascertained, the planning of population movements became, in theory, simple. In practice, of course, there were a good many difficulties.

Tribal boundaries and the original ownership of the land had to be taken into consideration, though these were not regarded as necessary and, in fact, a large area formerly occupied by the Ilenge was used for the resettlement of a section of the Chewa. Other factors also limit movement. There is, obviously, a physical limit; fifty miles was regarded as the maximum practical move, but in extreme cases villages were moved as much as seventy miles. Traditional systems of land usage are, generally, adaptations to particular sets of ecological conditions and people cannot be moved into an environment unsuited to their food crops and method of production. Cattle-owning people will not willingly move to tsetse country leaving their herds behind.

Water supplies proved to be a very great difficulty over large areas, especially in the Eastern Province. Natural supplies were not sufficient to allow of full utilization of the land on the basis of its carrying capacity, and in some cases practically no settlement was possible before artificial watering points had been provided. It appeared that, in the Eastern Province at least, permanent surface water had greatly diminished in the twelve to twenty years during which the land had lain unoccupied. The old sites of villages and their sources of water supply were noted in the course of the

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FRS Ngoni FRS ● Mpezeni Lamba FQ8 Maravi FR4

surveys. In an astonishing number of cases these sites were in completely waterless country and what were stated to have been permanent streams, pools and springs had dried up. The fierce late fires which sweep through the empty country each year may have been a major cause of the desiccation.

§ 4. *Roads and Watering Points*

After survey had been completed and before movement into an area started, roads (generally earth tracks twelve feet wide) were constructed. These were essential in order to facilitate movements of people and their food-stocks and goods, to enable subsequent supervision and to allow of the construction of watering-points. The preliminary surveys and the maps constructed from them were invaluable in planning the road systems in relation to topography and soils, so that they would be passable throughout the year.

Wherever necessary plans were prepared in advance, also on the basis of the preliminary surveys, to provide sufficient water for the number of people to be moved into each area, and the work of constructing water points was undertaken by the Water Development Department. Water was usually provided by means of dug wells (25 to 100 feet in depth), occasionally supplemented by bore-holes, but in some areas wells were unsuccessful and earth dams were constructed. In one locality, the Mushiri resettlement area of Ndola, a particularly favourable site was used to make a large central dam which was stocked with bream (*Tilapia spp.*) in the hope of producing a fish supply for the surrounding villages. A large scale water programme was undertaken, and is still in progress, in the Eastern Province and a minor programme of some thirty wells has been completed in Ndola District where natural supplies are very much better.

§ 5. *Game and Tsetse Control*

Another difficulty was the occurrence of destructive game in unoccupied country. Villages commonly objected to movement on the grounds that elephant and wild pigs would destroy the crops, an objection which often contained a good deal of substance.

Reduction of destructive game was carried out, as far as ammunition supplies and trained African staff would allow, by the Department of Game and Tsetse Control.

In the northern part of Fort Jameson District, where a few cases of sleeping sickness appeared among villages moved into a 'fly' area, a campaign of game elimination was undertaken by the Department in conjunction with the clearing of 'hard pan' (pockets of *Albizzia Harveyi* on compacting pedocal soils, generally near watercourses). These measures appear to be giving very satisfactory and rapid results and the fly has been much reduced or eliminated in areas where it was formerly abundant.

to plant a small number of trees (four per hut is the general rule). Seeds, seedlings and cuttings of mango, mulberry, lemon, guava, pawpaw and banana are distributed free from Departmental and Native Authority nurseries. The trees are planted within or about the sites of the new villages and the people are on the whole willing enough to plant them but show little inclination to care for them once they have been planted. Losses from drought and damage from fowls and small stocks are fairly heavy and in the Western Province two severe winters in succession have frosted off a number of young plantations. It is still uncertain whether this attempt to establish village orchards will be successful.

The only other general restrictions on land use are the prohibition of cultivation within demarcated areas and of late burning of grass and bush. In all village blocks non-cultivation areas have been demarcated for the preservation of streamsides and steep slopes. Areas have also been demarcated as Forest Reserves for future timber supplies and for the protection of watersheds, and in some cases land which is not required for present use has been reserved against the future needs of a growing population. Late burning of grass and bush is prohibited and the responsibility for early burning of the village blocks is placed upon the headmen concerned. These prohibitions are enforced by Native Authority Rules.

§ 8. *Housing*

In most of the resettlement areas an attempt has been made to improve the standard of housing and the layout of villages and on the whole this has been fairly successful. When the permanent site has been selected (sometimes a lengthy business involving consultation with the ancestral spirits) the lay-out of the village is planned and the situation of each building marked out by an African Assistant. The people are persuaded to adopt a somewhat higher standard of building, but no compulsion is used and they have generally been willing enough to do so if the standard expected is not too high. The standard of housing and village lay-out is certainly an improvement, if not a very great one, on the standard within the Reserves.

In the Western Province a number of model villages have been built at Kinkuzhy brick. These were built by the villagers themselves, with the assistance of a small team of skilled builders and thatchers employed by the Administration. The object was to stimulate a desire for better housing and it seems to have done so in some degree since most of the other villages have now volunteered to become 'models'.

§ 9. *Animal Movements*

The movement of a village for a comparatively short distance, a day's journey of fifteen miles or so does not present any particular difficulty and the African has long been used to such movements. If it is impossible

Ramsay E,G-S (ca.1900) 1907 FRS Ngoni FRS

VI

A VILLAGE EXODUS

1. The village chief, when he wishes to remove the village to a new site, tells the young men of the village beforehand to look out all the building materials necessary. These they will just pile up. Then some day the head old man gets up very early in the morning to go and seek a suitable spot. When he finds a good place, he says, "Yes, this is where I shall build" (lit. "This is my place"). When he goes to the village that evening, he tells them not to break the rules enforced on such occasions, as he wishes to "kindle fire in the forest," as he is tired of the present site of the village. Next morning at dawn he rises very early, along with his brother and the medicine man, and goes to the site of the new village. They begin to walk all round, tying grass tufts into little knots and smearing them with medicine, and they make fire where they are going to build the Kuta hut, and they put some medicine on the fire, and bring water, and blow it in a spray out of their mouth. And the reason they thus medicine-guard the village, is for fear of lions and human flesh-eaters. Then the village people move with the building materials, and they are told to "clear the ground." And they do so, and when this is finished, the chief takes the door-posts and sticks them in position, and also the side-posts, when others put them in (firmly). When the Kuta hut is complete they begin with that of the headman. When dark others leave, going back to the old village. There remain only the chief, and the others who will continue to sleep there, not

6:Ratray E, G-6 (ca. 1900) 1907 FRS Ngoni FRS

again returning to the old village. That evening they take some of the fire (that they made earlier in the day) to kindle a fire with in the (new) hut (*Kuku*). In kindling it they do not squat down, they blow the faggots into flame from a standing position, and they do this lest the smoke might ever after hang in wreaths over the floor. The women-folk come every day to cook.

11. When the chief's huts are finished, they build those of the old men, and when these are complete, they bring all the huts [from the old village]. When they see that all the huts are finished, beer is made at the old village, and they go and bring the spirits. He who has a grave pours some beer in a gourd-pot and places it on the grave, saying, "We have gone hence, you must not search for us here, come let us go together." On that day they demolish all the huts that remain, they leave only the huts of which the occupant has lately died. When now the sun begins to slant westward, from the *Kuku* hut they take five gourd-pots, and fill them with beer and make young women carrying these lead the way. The head old woman of the *Kuku* hut goes first, the chief wife of the chief follows *Gogo*, and then come the ones carrying the beer. When they arrive at the new village they set down the gourd-pots and all the people assemble. The elder of the village then begins to propitiate, saying, "There is the beer we down on earth have made, we have gone from yonder, we present to you your new village, all men you will have a cure for." Then the village chief makes a present of a goat and hands it to the old man, and he again speaks, saying, "Here is a goat which your child presents, you will wash it down with the beer." If the goat makes water, that is to say the spirit consents, if it will not they do not kill it. Then they kill the goat

conquer the Germans as they conquered us.' The Ngoni are by no means unaware of white political antagonism and questioned me closely about present day relations between English and Germans, and between English and Dutch in South Africa. Though they have seen from their own observation that modern warfare as practised by Europeans is entirely different from warfare as they knew it, they are nevertheless interested in war to-day as an 'instrument of national policy'.

It is from this angle that the Ngoni in Mpezeni's country regard the 'war' between them and the British in 1898. It was a trial of strength; they were defeated by superior power.' When the Ngoni tell the story of this war they make it clear that just as they had defeated the other tribes with their superior weapons, so it was British superiority in weapons which won the day, because their machine-guns were used with deadly force on the Ngoni warriors. The version of the fighting current in the villages was told me many times, always with a note of awe and horror at the unexpected and overwhelming catastrophe. When the British punitive force camped outside Mpezeni's kraal, the Ngoni *indunas* went to ask if they were ready to fight. The reply was, 'Wait, the *Amaxosa* are eating'. Another later messenger brought back word that the *Amaxosa* had finished breakfast and were ready, and the companies sallied out, and the machine-guns were arranged facing the kraal exit. Then the Ngoni warriors sprang out, holding their shields before them, and were met by a hail of fire from the machine-guns. To their horror they found their invincible shields were no longer a protection. Many fell, the rest fled, and the huge village[1] was looted and burned. 'The *Amaxosa* war was too strong', is the way they invariably end this often repeated tale.

Overwhelming though this military catastrophe was, to the Ngoni it is the events preceding and following the 'war' on which they dwell, when in the villages they speak of this period of white contact. 'We are not ashamed for the war', they say, 'We are ashamed for losing our cattle and our land'. They tell to this day how a certain Carl Weise, a German, came up from Portuguese East Africa trading,[2]

[1] In the Report of Justice Maugham on the North Charterland Inquiry he says, 'It was a considerably well-managed little war and the Ngoni conquered their defeat in good spirit like other Bantu races'.

[2] Over 3 miles across. [3] In 1885.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

422 Mpezeni is the owner of the land, or of the world. The cattle kept in
231 the royal villages are held to have belonged formerly to Mpezeni I or
643 to Zwangendaba, and therefore still belong to the Paramount Chief.
Chiefs and other members of the royal lineage who have cattle loaned in this way, in fact dispose of them as they please when the Paramount Chief is not in their village, but if he appears and a beast is killed in his honour, it is the Paramount who is pointed to as the owner of the beast and not the local owner. In the capital and chief's villages the lineman are more under the control of the chief of the country, who may intervene to depose a lineman if he thinks that his cattle are not being well looked after.

622 The Administration does not distinguish between one type of vil-
621 lage and another, and gives the same title of headman[1] to the man in
648 charge of the village, whatever he may be. It tends to act on the assumption that all headmen are of equal status and have the same amount of authority in their villages. Combined with the decline in the power of the royal lineage, this policy may lead to the assimilation of the different types of village to a common form.

II. THE VILLAGE

Material Setting

961 Ngoni villages, which form the principal units of administration in the country, contain from half a dozen to 120 huts. It is seldom more than a quarter of a mile from one edge of a village to the other. There is a rough arrangement of huts into parallel lines, with the doors all facing the same way at right-angles to the direction of the [949] lines. Kitchen huts, which are similar in appearance to dwelling huts, are included in these lines, while in front of a line of dwellings may be a line of storehouses and sties for small stock. On the edge of the [947] village are the cattle byres. There are seldom any fences marking off compounds within the village, so that it is possible to sit on the verandah of a hut and look along on all the other verandahs. If there are well-established divisions within the village, the boundaries of the divisions may be indicated by lines of elms.

592 Most people, except polygynists and some children, may be said to live in one hut, in which they keep most of their belongings and where they usually sleep. A single hut may be occupied by up to eleven wo-

[1] Usually *Indunas*, pl. *amakhosana*, *ukuvusa nduna yamanye*, pl. *ukuvusa amakhosana*. The specific term for headman of a ruler or commoner village is *umfokazana*.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

621 usually in the male line, and, other things being equal, it is the eldest
622 son of the chief who succeeds his father. However, if the heir is
a minor, the job of running the village may be undertaken by a
brother of the deceased or by the first lieutenant of the village, and
in this case difficulties may be placed in the way of the rightful heir
should he claim his heritage on maturity. The sarpan or his successors
may take the name of the founder of the village as though there had
been no break in the succession. There is among the Ngoni little of the
551 importance attached to the inheritance of names that is reported from
other tribes of the region. Anyone may use the name of any of his
patrilineal ancestors, so that, for example, most of the members of the
royal lineage, men and women, use the name of Mpezeni as formal
ancestor in addition to their other personal names.

To assist him in his work a headman may nominate a deputy, and
624 there may be in the village one or more lieutenants. The office of
lieutenant in a large and prosperous village tends to be hereditary, but
if there is no suitable successor the headman may appoint a man from
another family to succeed. Many headmen have no deputy and some
have no lieutenants.

In pre-conquest times the small residential group appears to have
621 consisted of the men of an effective minimal patrilineage,[1] their wives,
582 and the families of their prisoners of war. With the passage of time
179 some of the senior captives became lieutenants of the head of the lin-
eage and there was intermarriage between the aristocratic lineage and
the captured families as well as between one captured family and
another. This process of intermarriage has continued and I found, in
every village I examined in the Northern Rhodesia countries, that each
person is related to everyone else in the village, ethnically and exogamic-
ally, in at least one way, while many people are related to each other
by a number of different paths. In the Nyasaland countries this process
of ethnic assimilation has not been going on for so long, and here I
encountered families of former captives who have not yet been linked
by marriage to the family of their aristocratic captors.

Movement

961 A village is likely to stay in the same place for a dozen years or so.
166 During this time some of the huts will have fallen down and have been

[1] Fortes, *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 190: '... the effective minimal lineage, that is, the lineage of smallest span which emerges as a corporate unit in economic, jural, and ritual activities and is differentiated from other units of a like sort.'

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

replaced by new ones, but the village as a whole may be regarded as stationary. The exhaustion of garden land in the vicinity of the village is the principal reason for moving, as with the passage of time a man has to go further and further from the village to find new land. Sooner or later it becomes more convenient to move the village to another locality where there is plenty of unpossessed land on which gardens can be made. The death of the headman is sometimes followed by a move to a new site, while quarrels within a village may cause a portion of the inhabitants to go off and live on their own, usually after the matter has been referred to the chief. Since 1936 many villages have been moved off land alienated to Whites, or away from congested areas.

When the Administration is the instigator of the move, the new village site is a matter for discussion between District Officer, county chief, and village headmen. In moves made on the initiative of the villagers, the various possible new sites are reconnoitred by the headmen and other important people in the village and the site chosen is notified to the chief for his approval. The first people start to make their gardens in the vicinity of the site, and work is started on the new village. For this a recently abandoned garden site may be chosen, as it is easier to clear. The first structure to be built is usually a cattle byre. Making a byre is very hard work, and I was told that if it was left till later it would be difficult to get people to tackle the job. Ramsay, writing of Gomani's Ngoni of central Nyasaland, relates how the headman's kraal is built before the others, but this custom appears to be unknown in Fort Jameson District.[1]

Building is begun by the more industrious before the rains end, and is completed after the harvest. The transition from the old site to the new one is gradual, so, unless the distance between the sites is too great, people will continue working the gardens in the old area until they are exhausted. New gardens are indeed opened up on the old site of the village, and it is quite common to see the ground dug up between the huts at the end of the rains while there are people still living there.

[1] Ramsay, *Fieldwork Diaries*, pp. 1191-1211. Fraser, *Growing a Primitive People*, pp. 103-5, gives an account of the building of a new village among Mwaluko's Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, in which the cattle byre was built first, but it must be remembered that this was a village built around a sacred byre, after the fashion of the South-Eastern Ngoni, wherein the cattle byre is a Fort Jameson village is nowadays a smaller affair placed on the outskirts of the village.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

● 361 Huts sometimes become infested with ticks, or the site itself may prove to be intolerably damp. New huts are then built a short distance away, or even contiguously to the old site, and no new gardens are made apart from those made among the deserted huts.

Internal Segmentation of the Village

361 621 We have already seen that the divisions within the village are embryonic new villages. These divisions are most formally indicated in the Nyamkosi country, where there are large villages divided into a distinct number of divisions, with the spatial boundaries between the divisions indicated by a greater interval between the huts, and with each division named and under the charge of a lieutenant or of a particular kinsman of the headman. On the Rhodesian side, however, it is more usual to find that certain small clusters of huts within a village are regarded as being the division of such-and-such a person living in one of them. The huts of the huts in the village do not belong to any particular cluster but merely to the village as a whole. These clusters do not have any name apart from that of their senior inhabitant, whose close relatives occupy the huts of the cluster. The leader of a cluster may be a lieutenant of the headman or merely some important person with a comparatively large body of dependants. Such clusters, which are often on the periphery of the village, sometimes originate from the grouping together by a polygynist of the huts of his various wives, and grow as their children marry and live alongside their parents. Another mechanism for the formation of clusters is that [166] of immigration into the village at about the same time by a number of persons related to each other more closely than to the other inhabitants of the village, as, for example, on the break-up of some other village. The immigrants tend to build together if there is room. In this case the leader of the cluster may have little standing in the village. The boundaries of clusters are not always plainly indicated, while a man who is ambitious to make his own village may or a few may try to increase the clarity with which his cluster is defined spatially.

Land Utilization

311 241 We may divide gardens into three types: main, old village, and moist. The moist gardens are made near streams, and are fenced to keep out cattle. Tomatoes, cabbages, onions, and other vegetables are grown, and maize is planted during the hot season so that it can be harvested in December or January. These gardens are cultivated only by the

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

more industrious and usually with a view to sale of vegetables in Fort Jameson. The sites last for many years and are usually abandoned because of the removal of the owner's village to a distant place rather than because of exhaustion of the soil.

Old-village gardens are made on the site of former huts and byres, in order to take advantage of the high fertility of the soil. These gardens are not usually fenced, except when they are made on the outskirts of some existing village on the site of an old byre. Tobacco is sometimes grown, but for the most part they are cultivated in the same way as are main gardens. The site belongs to the former owner of the hut or byre, so long as the garden continues to be worked.

Main gardens are made from bush clearings, and are chosen with some regard to the type and quantity of the natural vegetation. Land that has been abandoned for long enough, say twenty-five years, regains its natural cover, and if the ownership of former gardens has been forgotten, it is treated as though it were virgin woodland, that is, it is permissible for anyone who wishes to come and cultivate it. A new village site is chosen to be near, if possible, an ample amount of such regenerated land, and at the first selection of gardens the headman of the village may go round the area and see where the new gardens are being made. Gardens used to be within a mile of the village, but there is no one definite area that is associated with a particular village, so that if there are a number of villages in proximity, the gardens of their inhabitants will be intermingled. A man exercises a lien on the area of uncleared land round his garden, and may take up this land himself or let strangers his garden. Hence at first there are considerable belts of bush left between one garden and the next. With the passage of time, these are cleared, and gardens become contiguous, with boundaries between them that are almost imperceptible at first glance. At the same time as enlargements are made, the least productive parts of the gardens are neglected, so that, as the years go by, the area cultivated by one man may gradually change its position, and fresh areas of virgin land will appear between the gardens. Main gardens vary in size from about 1 to 3 acres.

If a man moves into a village and wishes to start a garden, he is usually given part of the garden of the person to whom he is attached in the village. A son returning from the mines may be given part of his father's garden. Commonly when someone leaves the village, his garden passes to his relatives. In particular, when a man dies, his

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

widows continue to cultivate the gardens they had before his death. When a man opens up a new garden he may hand over his newly cultivated old garden to some relative who does not wish to go to the labour of clearing new ground himself. Rights in land cannot be sold, but only given away, and no presents are given to the donor by the recipient of a garden or garden site. They can only be exercised by continued residence in the locality, either by the owner of the rights himself or by his relatives. There are very few court cases concerned with rights in land, and in the courts the only attempt I saw in which a man tried to enforce what he thought to be his rights was met by the statement from the bench that no one had any rights in land, for did not all land belong to the chief?

Maize is planted at the beginning of the rains, and the garden is usually weeded twice over before the maize has grown high enough to surmount the weeds. When the rains end, the stalks are felled and put into large stooks to dry. The cobs are then taken off the stalks and carried back to the village to be stored. Finger millet is grown in old-fertilized patches scattered through the main garden, and in between the maize ground-nuts, pumpkins, and other crops are grown. Sorghum, bulrush millet, and rice are also grown. Most of the work in the garden is carried on in the rainy season, and after the harvest the garden is more or less deserted until the next season, although a certain amount of new land may be cleared as a garden extension.

Dwellings outside the Village

There are two types of settlement outside the recognized villages that require mention. These are permanently occupied settlements consisting of two or three huts which I shall refer to as hamlets and temporarily occupied huts in the gardens. The hamlets usually arise as a result of quarrels within a village that are resolved by the breaking away of one of the parties to the quarrel. The activities of the Agricultural Department have also led to the formation of hamlets of similar size, both of hamlets of persons accepting agricultural control whose ex-villagers have all moved off, and the other way about. These hamlets are all attached to proper villages for registration purposes, and participate in many of the collective activities of the villages near by.

The damage done to crops in the latter part of the rainy season necessitates the keeping of a continuous watch, particularly at gardens that are on the edge of a cultivated area, in order to drive off the monkeys by day and the wild pigs by night. Shelters are erected on

THE VILLAGE

the edge of gardens, and some people spend most of their time there, returning to the village only to fetch food. Beer parties are held in the gardens, and the villages, particularly in the middle of the week, are largely deserted during the day. One or two boys or old men may may be left to look after the cattle. Streams are in spate at this time of year, and some men build garden byres to which they move their cattle to avoid the risk of the animals or their herdboys being taken by the water.

This life in the gardens is important from the point of view of home-village action in that it provides an opportunity for new residential groups to form, albeit temporarily. People without garden shelters of their own may share the shelter of a neighbouring gardener, who may be from another village. People may site their gardens so that they are adjacent to those of kindred from other villages, with whom they will be united for this period of garden residence. Thus, for example, a woman who lives in her husband's village has a widowed mother still living in her dead husband's village a mile away. The gardens of the mother and daughter are adjacent, and they both possess garden huts which are built alongside one another. They co-operate in much of the work of their gardens.

With the completion of the harvest, the need for living in the gardens ceases, but some people delay their return to the village for a month or so. The explanation given is that immediately after the end of the rains and the harvest, there is much activity by the Administration and the Native Authority in organising public works, and that by staying on in the gardens people hope to avoid becoming involved in these projects.

Cattle-keeping

The circular village cattle byre, with the dwelling huts built round it in a great circle, as occurs among the South-Eastern Bantu and as reported by Elmslie[1] from Monteiro's Ngoni of Nyasaland, is not found at the present time among the Fort Jameson Ngoni. Most villages now have two or three separate cattle byres, and they are placed on the periphery of the village area. They consist of fenced enclosures open to the weather, with a single entrance blocked with poles, and may be up to 20 yards across. Calves are kept in smaller enclosures or in deserted dwelling huts whose owners have gone away or are dead. Where there are well-defined clusters of huts within a village, each cluster may have its own byre, but this is not always the case. Cattle

[1] Elmslie, p. 30.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

have affected the content of their Christian beliefs and their utilization of Christian institutions, there is now little religious activity that can be called pagan.

The Nyasaland Country

The Fort Jameson Ngoni maintain strong connexion with the two countries under Ngoni chiefs in the Fort Manning division of Lilongwe District, Nyasaland. When the border was drawn between North-Eastern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, about a quarter of Mpezeni's tribal area fell within Nyasaland. The two countries have been administered separately, so that the ties that have persisted have done so despite the formal division of the area and are in the main derived from sentiments related to pre-conquest times. These ties are seen in operation in the attendance of the Nyasaland chiefs at Mpezeni's village on various formal occasions, as at the ceremony ending the mourning for Mpezeni II and beginning the reign of Mpezeni III. In 1920 a delegation from the Nyasaland chiefs visited Mpezeni, and in 1922 Mpezeni took a party across into Nyasaland to visit the two chiefs, apparently with the idea of discussing the possibility of moving his capital into Nyasaland[1] where there was more land available than there was for him in Northern Rhodesia. From time to time Mpezeni has called on the Nyasaland chiefs to send him maize when his own supplies have run low, and these requests have been met. The Nyasaland Administration has also tried to keep alive the connexion with Mpezeni. In the past the Magistrate at Fort Manning brought the Nyasaland chiefs into Fort Jameson to meet Mpezeni there on such occasions as the King's Birthday, while in 1932 when there was a dispute between the two chiefs as to which was the senior, the District Officer informed them that the question did not arise as they were both only lieutenants of Mpezeni. On the other hand, the Nyasaland Administration has intervened to prevent tribal levies for the benefit of Mpezeni.

There are also relationships across the border that arise principally from the mere territorial contiguity of the two areas. The border, which is the Luangwa-Nyasa watershed, is not easy to follow and there has sometimes been doubt as to where it runs. The villages stretch without interruption across the watershed and there is much coming and going from one village to another. Some villages have moved from one country to the other and many people have relatives on both sides of the border. The Catholic Missions were for a long

[1] Mpezeni I had the same idea. Cf. *British Central Africa Gazette*, 1 August 1895, p. 2.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

486 562 858 over sixteen are not allowed to leave without a pass from their Native Authority until they have paid tax for one year at home.[1] These laws are quite energetically enforced, principally by the placing of Native Authority police at strategic points along the lorry routes. These police inspect the passes of all passengers on the lorries, and bring offenders before the nearest Native Court.

486 562 The devices adopted to evade these restrictions are much as one might expect. The drivers of the lorries may be won over, particularly by women. A woman may get a lorry driver to say that she is his wife, or even enter into a temporary marriage with him, if she wishes to run away without a ticket. Some people walk to the far side of the police point and then attempt to get on the lorry after the search has been completed. A woman who has a ticket but no pass may pose as the wife of some unaccompanied male passenger.

484 167 The motives for leaving the area are many. Most of the men go to look for work, although a few go away to visit their urban relatives and friends for a holiday. Others go to buy goods that may be unobtainable locally for the time being, such as tools or window-panes, or which they think they can get more cheaply elsewhere, such as bicycles. Many of the women go to join their husbands, but some are fleeing from them, or have grown tired of living at home married to men who live permanently in Southern Rhodesia, and are out to try their luck in the towns.

489 Whereas the outgoing lorries are comparatively empty of goods, the returning passengers are well loaded with belongings. The fares are higher, and the Mtoko–Mtsale service is not free on the northward trip. One of the most important commodities brought in along these 205 routes is the mail. Men working in Southern Rhodesia and elsewhere write home to keep their wives and brothers informed of their whereabouts, and send postal orders to enable their families to buy clothes.

This movement to and from the outside world must be seen in its relationship to the opportunities that exist for employment within the District on the tobacco farms.

Farm Labour

464 249 ●[361] No village in either of the reserves occupied by the Ngoni is more than 12 miles from a farm. This means that it is possible for a man to work as a labourer on a farm and yet retain a large number of his contacts with his village and chief. In particular, his wife and children

[1] Ngoni N. A. Order 37.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

can live in the village and cultivate a garden. The maintenance of contacts is facilitated by the fairly general custom of work on the farms at the week-ends. Apart from two periods of tobacco slump, the local demand for labour has exceeded the supply ever since the earliest period of European settlement. As early as January 1910 the manager of the North Charterland Exploration Company complained to the Administration that the lack of local labour was very serious, and attributed this to the large number of people who were going away to work in Southern Rhodesia. This theme has been repeated over and over again ever since. The practical effect of this chronic local shortage of labour has been that work on the farms has always been a more easy-going affair than work away on the mines or in the big towns. Men have been able to absent themselves from work to attend to their affairs at home very much as they have pleased. Payment has been either for piece-work or for the number of days worked, so that at one time it was not unusual for a man to take two or three months to complete thirty days' work, for which he had contracted.

Prior to about 1930, there were a few villages located on farm-land, whose inhabitants undertook to work for so many days, with pay, in return for permission to remain on the land. With the completion of the move into reserves, this became rare, and at the present time the bulk of the people who live on farm-land are accommodated in compounds provided for them by the farmer. These people are the labourers on the farm for the time being, their families, and friends. The compound is under the charge of a foreman who is usually an employee of long standing on the farm. On some of the farms there are small gardens, but none of them, so far as I know, permit the keeping of cattle by the labourers. This means that a man with cattle must continue to keep them at home in his village or in the village of a relative. Cattle are still the principal form of investment, particularly for people who cannot spend their capital in building a brick house, so that it is common to find in a village that many of the cattle in the byre are being tended for the benefit of an absent owner who spends the majority of his time away on a farm and who may not even have a hut in the village.

The demand for labour on the tobacco farms varies considerably with the time of year, being greatest from about Christmas until about June. At the same time, the calls on a man to tend his own garden are greatest from about November until May. Farmers therefore try to get labour for a few days at a time from people who live in villages

/3 cont'd/

Clan names, however, are inherited from the father in most Nguni families. These names are used as surnames for the purposes of the Administration, and as forms of polite address. On marriage, a man and wife may live in either the village of the man or of the woman, although the custom whereby initially they should live in the village of the woman for a few years is still followed by some.

III

In the village there are dwelling huts, storehouses, pens for the small animals, drying platforms, and cattle byres. The huts are often arranged in rather uneven parallel lines, with all the huts facing the same way. The fences found in other parts of the country enclosing a small courtyard round the hut, are not often seen here. Each married woman has her own hut, and possibly a smaller hut as well, used as a kitchen and sleeping place for visitors and children. Unmarried adolescents of one sex sleep together in modest huts they have built for themselves or else in a hut left empty by a former resident. Where bamboos are available, as in the north and east of the area, they are used to form the framework of a circular hut. The walls are made in two concentric circles, with mud plastered on the inside of the inner circle, but with the outer circle often left unmudded. The walls are made in unbroken circles, doorways being cut out later with an axe. The space between the two circles is used for storing pots and other household goods and is sometimes used for cooking. The bamboos are woven together, split bamboos going horizontally and unsplit ones vertically, so that light is able to pass through the unplastered wall. Open lattice fencing is also found forming part of the outer wall.

Where bamboos are not available, either circular or rectangular huts of poles and mud are made. Rectangular huts are often subdivided with a partition wall, to make a separate sleeping place, while the verandah may be partly walled in to make a cooking shelter protected from the weather. With both bamboo and pole huts, the

15:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)901
F85 Ngoni F85

when the death penalty can hardly be exacted, or compensation made in the delivery over of slaves, they find it hard to satisfy demands and make a show of justice.

Now let us speak of the social life of the people. The Ngoni differ from most of the Central Africa tribes in their habit of living in large unprotected villages. The residency of most of the other tribes is to scatter themselves in very little hamlets over a wide area, with scarcely a path of communication between the villages. Where war has harassed them they have built huge enclosed villages for their mutual protection, but as soon as assured peace has come again, the towns have split into numerous distant groups of houses. This seems to be caused by the dread and mistrust of one another which the people have through their superstitious belief in a evil eye, and in witchcraft, and through the perpetual little quarrels that arise. A carrier who was accompanying a friend of mine described this state very well when they passed a little village of four huts, and then a few hundred yards further on an isolated hut. Holding up his hand he cried, "Look at Mr. Thumb saying to Messrs. Forefingers, keep your distances."

The heart of a Ngoni village is the large circular cattle kraal. There all the court cases are tried, there the visitors are received, and there the dances are held. Round the kraal the village of beehive huts is built in regular rows, and then immediately outside the gardens begin. The village life takes the place of family life, and the headman is father of all the people. The boys after they have attained to twelve years of age or so live in huts by themselves, and the girls in huts on the opposite side of the village. These girls' quarters used to be most carefully guarded, and any man found in their enclosure after dark could be killed.

The great part of the Ngoni nation consists of domestic slaves. They are people, or the descendants of people, who have been captured in raiding expeditions. But their position is not a hard one. If they are discontented they may change masters. They give their masters a little free labour, and in return are made members of his family; he espouses all their quarrels, looks after them in sickness, and shares some of his superfluity with them, but they have to share some of their necessities with him.

Polygamy was the universal custom of the people until recently. Now hundreds of polygamous unions are being dissolved every year. But in the rougher days polygamy was a necessary